

INEQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT: THE POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS OF
POST-WAR DECENTRALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN EL SALVADOR, 1992-2000

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This dissertation is about decentralization and agrarian politics in post-war El Salvador (1992-1998). Decentralization of government has been prescribed widely in Latin America over the past two decades, justified on the premise that it encourages more accountable governance by empowering local actors. However, under conditions of high inequality and weak democracy, decentralization tends to reinforce already existing distributions of power and is frequently captured instead by powerful elites as a top-down strategy for preserving their interests. Given this ambiguous mandate, a performance standard for empowered local actors is required. I propose a novel conceptualization of empowerment as my dependent variable that is multidimensional and is examined at three levels of analysis (individual, meso-organizational, macro-societal). I hypothesize that under conditions of high inequality and weak institutions, decentralization works (i.e. empowerment is achieved) when local actors acquire capital resources and through collective action they contest inequality to convert those resources into sustainable livelihood improvements and more favorable power relations. Effective decentralization can therefore be contentious and may disempower local actors when collective action problems are insurmountable. In El Salvador, two competing empowerment strategies may be distinguished. Empowerment by invitation is a top-down, elite brokered process of political negotiation, premised upon a positive sum distribution of the benefits and a prior acceptance of the rules of the game. Empowerment through conflict, on the other hand, implies a bottom-up, zero-sum contestation over political benefits, as well as the very rules and privileges that assure elites a cut of any subsequent benefit distribution. To assess the performance of these competing empowerment strategies, I conduct a most similar case study comparison of three conflictive municipalities in the paracentral region of El Salvador that differ in one fundamental factor: their respective insurgent, hard-line counter-insurgent and moderate counter-insurgent political histories. Using survey analysis and process tracing, the evidence shows that where decentralization reinforced a process of diminishing inequality (Tecoluca) local actors were empowered to collect more local taxes, provide better services, achieve efficacious participation and attain more far reaching institutional coordination. The persistence of high inequality in both counter-insurgent cases weakened mechanisms for participation, accountability and transparency that in turn made decentralization highly susceptible to bureaucratic resistance, corruption and the prioritization of elite interests – in other words, political capture.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABANSA	National Salvadoran Bankers Association
ACCOVI de RL	Asociación Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Comunal Vicentino de Responsabilidad Limitada
ACDNSV	Asociación Campesina de Desarrollo del Norte de San Vicente
ACE	Asociaciones Comunales para la Educación
ACOASMI	Asociación Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito el Roble de R.L.
ACOPAI	Asociación de Cooperativas Productivas Agrícolas
ACOPROSAVI de RL	Asociación Cooperativa de Aprovechamiento, Comercialización, Ahorro y Crédito de Productores Agropecuarios de San Vicente de Responsabilidad Limitada
ADEL	Agencia de Desarrollo Económico Local
ADESCO	Asociación de Desarrollo Comunitario
AID	Agency for International Development (USAID)
AIFLD	American Institute for Free Labor Development
ALCA	Area de Libre Comercio de Las Américas
ALFALIT	Alfabetización y Literatura en El Salvador
ALGES	Asociación de Lisiados de Guerra
AMES	Association of Salvadoran Women
AMPES	Asociación de Medianos y Pequeños Empresarios Salvadoreños
AMSS	Area Metropolitana de San Salvador
ANDA	Administración Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados
ANEP	Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada
ANSESAL	Salvadoran National Intelligence Agency
ANTEL	Asociación Nacional de Telecomunicaciones
APRAINORES	Asociación de Productores Agroindustriales Orgánicos
ARENA	Nationalist Republican Alliance of El Salvador (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista de El Salvador)
ASDEC	Asociación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo Comunal
ASDI	Agencia Sueca para el Desarrollo internacional (SIDA)
ASDI	Asociación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo Integral
ASI	Asociación Salvadoreña de Industria
ASMUR	Asociación de Mujeres Rurales
ATACES	Association of Agricultural and Peasant Workers of El Salvador
BCIE	Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica
BCR	Banco Central de Reserva de El Salvador
BIOLACT	Sistema Agroindustrial de Lácteos Orgánicos
BFA	Agricultural Development Bank
BM	World Bank
BMI	Banco Multisectorial de Inversiones
BPR	Revolutionary Popular Bloque
CA	Collective Action
CA-1	Carretera Panamericana
CA-2	Carretera del Litoral
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration

CACM	Central American Common Market
CARE	Cooperativa Americana de Remesas al Exterior (ONG)
CAMAGRO	Agricultural Chamber of Commerce
CASALCO	Cámara Salvadoreña de Construcción
CBI	Caribbean Basin Initiative
CCAD	Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo
CDA	Departmental Mayors' Council (Consejo Departamental de Alcaldes)
CDE	Consejos Directivos Escolares
CDHES	Centro de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador
CDL	Comité de Desarrollo Local
CDM	Comité de Desarrollo Municipal
CDR	Comité de Desarrollo Rural
CE	Comisión Europea
CEB	Christian Base Community (Comunidades Eclesiales de Base)
CECADE	Centro de Capacitación y Promoción de la Democracia
CEL	National Power Company (Comisión Ejecutiva Hidroeléctrica del Río Lempa)
CENDEPESCA	Centro de Desarrollo Pesquero
CENTA	Centro Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria y Forestal
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe
CIREFCA	International Conference on Central American Refugees
CII	Comité Inter-institucional
CLUSA	Liga Cooperativas de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica
CNC	National Peasant Confederation
CND	National Development Commission
CNR	National Central Registry
CNR	National Coordination for Repopulation
COEN	Comité de Emergencia Nacional
COMURES	Corporación de Municipalidades de la República de El Salvador
CONAMYPE	Comisión Nacional de la Micro y Pequeña Empresa
CONADES	Comisión Nacional de Asistencia a los Desplazados de El Salvador
CONARA	National Commission for the Restoration of Areas
CONIP	National Commission of the Popular Church
CORDES	Asociación para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Comunal de El Salvador
COSUDE	Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación
CRECER	Proyecto Crecimiento Económico Equitativo Rural
CREFAC	Centro de Reorientación Familiar y Comunitaria
CRIPDES	Salvadoran Committee for Displaced Persons/
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DIDECO	Dirección de Desarrollo Comunal (Ministerio del Interior)
DIGESTYC	National Directorate for Statistical and Resources Development
ECA	Estudios Centroamericanos (revista)
EDUCO	Educando con la Comunidad

EE.UU	United States
EHPM	Multipurpose Household Survey
ENDL	National Strategy for Local Development (FISDL)
ERP	Revolutionary Army of the People
FAES	Armed Forces of El Salvador
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FARO	Eastern Region Farmers Front
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FDN	National Democratic Front (ORDEN)
FDR	The Revolutionary Democratic Front / Frente Democrático Revolucionario
FEDARES	Federación de Asociaciones de Regantes de El Salvador
FEDECACES	Federación de Asociaciones Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito de El Salvador
FEDISAL	Fundación para le Educación Integral Salvadoreña
FECCAS	Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants
FEMICA	Federación de Municipios del Istmo Centroamericano
FIDA	Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola
FINATA	Financiera Nacional de Tierras Agrícolas
FISDL	Social Investment Fund for Local Development
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
FMLN	The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional)
FPL	Popular Liberation Forces / Fuerzas para la Liberación Nacional
FODES	Fund for Social and Economic Development
FOMMI	Programa de Fomento a la Microempresa
FONAES	Fondo Ambiental de El Salvador
FONAVIPO	Fundación Nacional para la Vivienda Popular
FOVIAL	Highway Maintenance Fund (Fondo Vial)
FTA	Free Trade Agreement (Tratado de Libre Comercio)
FTC	Rural Workers Front (Frente de Trabajadores de Campo)
FSLN	Frente Sandinista para la Liberación Nacional
FSVP	Fundación San Vicente Productivo
FUNDAMUNI	Fundación de Apoyo a Municipios de El Salvador
FUNDASAL	Salvadoran Foundation for Development and Housing / Fundación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo y Vivienda
FUNDAUNGO	Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo
FUNDE	Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo
FUNDECIT-ITAMA	Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Ciencia y Tecnología
FUNDEMÁS	Fundación Empresarial para la Acción Social
FUNDESA	Fundación para el Desarrollo
FUNPROCOOP	Fundación Promotora de Cooperativas
FUNSALPRODESE	Fundación Salvadoreña para la Promoción Social y el Desarrollo Económico
FUSADES	Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social
FUSAI	Fundación Salvadoreña de Apoyo Integral

GBL	Bajo Lempa Group (Grupo Bajo Lempa)
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility (Fondo Ambiental Global)
GN	Guardia Nacional
GOES	Government of El Salvador
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Sociedad para la Cooperación Técnica – Alemania)
HABITAT	Habitat for Humanity International
HTA	Hometown Association
IAF	Inter-American Foundation
ICC	Iniciativa de la Cuenca del Caribe
IDB	InterAmerican Development Bank
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGN	Instituto Geográfico Nacional
IICA	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura
ILP	Instituto Libertad y Progreso
IMF	Internacional Monetary Fund
INGO	internacional Non-Governmental Organization
INJIBOA	Jiboa Sugar Mill
ISDEM	Instituto de Desarrollo Municipal
ISTA	Instituto Salvadoreño de Transformación Agraria
IVA	Impuesto sobre el Valor Agregado
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LEMPA ACAHUAPA	Lempa Acahuapa Irrigation District
MAG	Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería
MARN	Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
MINEC	Ministerio de Economía
MINED	Ministerio de Educación
MINHA	Ministerio de Hacienda
MIPLAN	Ministerio de Planificación
MIREX	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
MOP	Ministerio de Obras Públicas
MSM	Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres
MSPAS	Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social
NFPS	Non-financial public sector
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission to El Salvador
OPAMSS	Oficina de Planificación del Area Metropolitana de San Salvador
ORDEN	Nationalist Democratic Organization
OVE	IDB Office of Evaluation and Oversight
PAES	IDB National Environmental Program for El Salvador
PC	Communist Party

PCN	National Conciliation Party
PDC	Christian Democrat Party
PDL	Programa de Desarrollo Local
PEA	Población Económicamente Activa
PH	Policía de Hacienda
PIB	Producto Interno Bruto
PMA	Programa Mundial de Alimentos
PNC	Policía Nacional Cívil
PNODT	Plan Nacional de Ordenamiento y Desarrollo Territorial
PPL	Popular Local Government (Poder Popular Local)
PPP	Plan Pueblo Panamá
PRISA	World Bank Agricultural Sector Reform Project
PRISMA	Programa Salvadoreño de Investigación sobre Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente
PROCAFE	Fundación Salvadoreña para Investigaciones del Café
PRODAP	Proyecto de Desarrollo Agrícola para Pequeños Productores de la Región Paracentral (FIDA-GOES)
PROESA	National Investment Promotion
PRN	National Reconstruction Program
PRODERNOR	Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural para las Poblaciones del Nor-Oriente
PROMUDE	Programa de Asesoramiento en el Fomento Municipal y la Descentralización (GTZ)
PRTC	Central American Revolutionary Workers Party
PTT	Programa de Transferencia de Tierras
REDES	
RN	National Resistance
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SAAO	Sistema Agroindustrial de Azúcar Orgánico
SACDEL	Sistema de Asesoría y Capacitación para el Desarrollo Local
SAFIMU	Sistema de Administración Financiera Integrada Municipal
SAMO	Sistema Agroindustrial del Maraón Orgánico
SETEFE	Secretaría Técnica de Financiamiento Externo
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency (ASDI)
SNIT	Sistema Nacional de Información Territorial (SNIT)
SRN	Nacional Reconstruction Secretariat (Secretaría de Reconstrucción Nacional)
SVP	San Vicente Productivo (Proyecto GOES – CE ALA 95/88)
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana ‘José Simeón Cañas’
UCS	Salvadoran Comunal Union
UDPs	Unidades de Producción
UE	Unión Europea
UES	Universidad de El Salvador
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEX	Unión de Exportadores, S.A. de C.V.
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF
UNO
USAID
UTC

Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia
National Opposition Union
United States Agency for International Development
Unión de Trabajadores de Campo

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

Exchange Rate (Official) (parallel)
1920s: 2 colones = \$1
1934-1952: 2.5 colones = \$1
1952-64: 5 colones = \$1
1970-71: 2.5 colones = \$1
1974-75: 2.5 colones = \$1
1979-1981: 2.5 colones = \$1
1982: 2.5 (4)
1983: 2.82
1984: 2.87
1985: 3.6 (6.5)
1986: 5 (5.14)
1987: 5 (8)
1990: 5 (8)
1998: 8.75

WEIGHTS & MEASURES CONVERSIONS

1 Hectare (Ha) = 10,000 square meters = 1.41 Manzana (Mz) =
 1.72 Acres = 22.2 Cuerdas
 1 Square Kilometer = 0.386 square miles = 100 Ha. = 141 Mz
 1 Caballería = 45.03 Ha = 64.6 Mz = 111.3 Acre
 1 Mz = 100 square varas
 1 Tarea = 0.0625 Mz = 438 square meters

1 kg = 2.204 lb
 1 Ton (Short Ton) = 907.18 Kg
 1 MT (Metric Ton) = 1,000 Kg = 2,200 lb
 1 Fanega = 312 lb = 16 Canastas
 1 Quintales (Qq) = 100 lb = 5.5 Medios = 45.4 kg
 1 Sack = 200 lb.
 1 Canasta (bushel) = 40 lb
 1 Bushel = 5.23 lb
 1 Arroba = 25 lb
 1 Medio = 18 lb
 1 Cuartillo = 16 lb
 1 Cuarto = 4.25 lb
 1 Bottle = 0.75 Liter
 1 Gallon = 5 Bottles = 3.8 Liters

GLOSSARY OF SPANISH TERMS

Adobe	Clay bricks for rural house construction
Anil	Indigo
Ajusticiamiento	Justice killing
Arroba	Measure of harvested coffee equivalent to 25 lb
Asistencialismo	Dependence on humanitarian relief aid
Beneficio	Coffee or cotton processing facility
Brigadista	Insurgent or popular health promoters
Cabecera	Municipal or department capital city
Caciquismo	Culture of support for or predominance of authoritarian strongmen
Campesino	Peasant or agricultural worker or poor rural person
Cantón	Smallest rural administrative division
Caserío	Rural village within the cantón
Censo	Percentage of crop and labor paid in exchange for land rent
Colono	Agricultural worker living on the hacienda (203)
Chele	Light skinned
Cuma	Short weeding machete, with a wide blade
Dulce de Panela	Brown sugar cakes produced from trapiche sugar cane process
Endiosado	Superior, powerful, perceived to endowed by God with special rights
Ejido	Indigenous common property right
Finatero	Beneficiaries of Phase III of the 1980 Land Reform
Finca	Coffee faro of any size
Gente de masa	Civilians belonging to mass organizations aligned with the FMLN
Guinda	Civilian flight from military attacks
Hacienda	Estate typically greater than 100 hectares, not coffee
Hacendado	Hacienda owner
Jornalero	Rural day laborer
Latifundista	Large landowner
Manzana	Measure of land, 0.7 hectares
Milpa	A field or plot cultivated in maize, sorghum or beans
Mística	Mystique
Pactado	Reference to a person that has struck a pact with the devil
Panela	Baked sugar blocks produced by trapiche mills
Patrono	Boss or landlord
Peón	Ordinary worker, regarded as at the bottom of the chain of command
Quintal	Common sack weight measure for food crops equivalent to 100 lb
Regidor	Alderman or municipal councilperson
Séptimo	Sunday's wage paid to rural laborers as a labor benefit
Sindico	Municipal auditor or legal representative below the mayor
Tecomate	Dry gourd water container
Terrateniente	Large landowner
Trapiche	Household sugar mill or press operated by family farmers

PREFACE

This dissertation rests on the shoulders of many. The errors are of course my own.

The field research for this dissertation, including a 913 person survey and related interviews, was conducted in El Salvador between 1998-1999 and in the U.S. in 1999. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Inter-American Foundation, the Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, and the Fulbright Institute for International Education for the field research portion of this project, and an Andrew Mellon Fellowship for the analysis and writing stages of the work. Post-doctoral research on the Salvadoran agrarian structure and post-war violence was supported by the North-South Centre in Ottawa.

The broad scope of the research underscores how much I have relied on the generous collaboration of colleagues, both in El Salvador and the North. I first want to thank the thoughtful guidance of my Committee members, particularly the co-chairs, John Markoff and Barry Ames.

In El Salvador, the research would not have been possible without the patient and generous contributions of many people. In particular, I benefited from the support of institutions such as the SHARE Foundation (and then program officer, Nelson Escobar), for facilitating much of the participant observation that I did in Tecoluca. The SHARE Foundation's accompaniment of local development processes such as those in Tecoluca represent the most striking exception to the unexceptional findings about NGOs working in El Salvador. The Centro de Información, Documentación y Apoyo a la Investigación (CIDAI) was crucial for checking many historical events through access to their archives. Similarly, the Centro de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES) also generously opened their historical archives for my investigation.

Many other laboring scholars in El Salvador and Central America were Aquiles Montoya,

Ricardo Córdova Macías, Javier Molina, Aquiles Montoya, Herman Rosa, Ana Eugenia Marin, Andres McKinley, Cynthia Curtis, David Holiday, Rafael Pleitez,

There are of course hundreds of other conversations that I have had with Salvadorans in communities, working in a variety of institutions, and living in the U.S., whose views have formed the bedrock of what is presented here and are too many to mention, if only to thank them for their patience with my questions.

I want to recognize many officials of the Salvadoran public sector, beginning with the mayors and council members of Tecoluca, San Ildefonso, Guadalupe, Verapáz, Nuevo Tepétitan and San Cayetano Istepeque, also made significant contributions of time and data. In this vein, access to documentation and interviews at the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and USAID, among other bilateral cooperation agencies, were invaluable for understanding the political opportunity structure within which Salvadorans are managing.

Two research relationships gave my work a tremendous advantage. At the outset of the project my conversations with Serena Fogaroli and her sharing of many documents related to her joint study on Tecoluca development with Sara Stowell resulted in insights and information that were crucial for my understanding of Tecoluca. Similarly, I thank Andrew Cummings, local development program officer and fellow scholar for the Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo, FUNDE, for his patient sharing of insights about Tecoluca and the local development process in general.

My survey team included one young seminarian to be, Hector Meneses, and eight senior agronomy students from the paracentral regional campus of the National University. I wish to thank Oscar Alas, Danilo Mejía, Edgar Orantes, Oscar Rodríguez, Roberto Amaya, José Rene Munoz, Alex Montano, and Hector Amaya for their professional assistance in conducting the survey and the respect and dignity with which they treated each respondent.

My research on the Salvadoran civil war and rural insurgency was aided by the advice and technical contributions of numerous scholars, development practitioners and social justice

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To my family and my daughter, Anna, I say thank you for your continued support, welcomed distractions and indulgence with this endeavor.

To Sonia, my mentor and love, I owe the greatest debt – the example of gentle determination from which I have learned so much.

I. CHAPTER ONE: DOES DECENTRALIZATION EMPOWER THE POOR? A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING POST-WAR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN EL SALVADOR

A. INTRODUCTION

Decentralization of government has been prescribed widely in Latin America over the past two decades, justified on the premise that it necessarily encourages more accountable governance by empowering local actors. From the classic work of Tiebout (1956), through the contemporary work of Ferejohn and Weingast (1997), decentralized systems are held to increase democratic legitimacy, while simultaneously improving the fiscal environment.¹ It performs these feats by transferring from the central state to local institutions services that are efficiently carried out by actors who are more in tune with local preferences (Musgrave 1959; Oates 1972).

In Latin America, local institutions have demanded greater decentralization as a **bottom-up** strategy to challenge inefficient, exclusive and corrupt central state agencies. However, these Tocquevillian local interests have unintentionally coincided with similar **top-down** state reform goals championed by the multilateral development banks (IMF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, *henceforth IFIs*). Not surprisingly, local institutions and their supporters have flourished. Municipal governments, while previously only figurehead appointments, are now almost universally elected and are increasingly engaged in local development.² Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civic associations and grassroots groups have also

¹ Recent studies of targeting failures by centralized governments include Bardhan (2005), Shah (2004), Bird (2003), Grosh (1990, 1994), Ravallion (1999a, 1999b), Inter-American Development Bank (1994) and World Bank (1997, 1994). Qian and Weingast (1997) debate Rose-Ackerman and Rodden (1997) regarding the reinforcing or corrosive effects of decentralization during market transitions in the case of China.

² Municipalities in El Salvador are like counties in the U.S. - an urban area that serves as the country seat surrounded by a rural area that is further divided into *cantones* (villages) and *caseríos* (hamlets).

proliferated across Latin America, resurrecting interest in the role of civil society in national development.³ In addition, social safety nets, which were initially deployed in response to development related emergencies as demand-driven (often externally financed) anti-poverty programs, have now assumed the status of permanent institutional interlocutors between communities and the state in almost every country. Considering Latin America's long centralist tradition, this remarkable shift toward decentralization has been described as a nothing less than a "*quiet revolution*" (World Bank 1997; Campbell 2003).

However, theories of political and fiscal decentralization were largely developed with reference to the advanced industrial democracies. Their application as pro-poor rural development policies in developing countries departs from traditional assumptions of fiscal federalism in several ways. Central governments in developing countries grant much less fiscal autonomy to local actors to compete through the supply of tax-expenditure packages. In contrast to what the theory would predict, high information costs inhibit the poorest citizens from exercising exit strategies to take advantage of differential provision of welfare programs (Conning and Kevane 1999: 32). More importantly, the proliferation of local actors competing over a relatively scarce provision of decentralized public goods has induced collective action problems that neutralize the benefits of localism (inter-jurisdictional coordination, realizing economies of scale, enforcement of contracts, monitoring of rule compliance, etc.).

There is at least some evidence that these collective action problems are exacerbated when the state is weak, when mechanisms for local political competition are non-existent, where inequality is high and where democracy is unconsolidated. In these settings, civil society has tended toward fragmentation rather than a coherent local system of checks and balances on local or national institutions. As a result, efficiency gains are usually small and decentralization is frequently captured instead by powerful elites as a top-down strategy for preserving their interests and political stability (Prud'homme 1995; Tanzi 1996, 2001). Particularly under conditions of high inequality in the distribution of assets or income, decentralization is prone to capture by local elites (Bardhan and Mookerjee 1999, 2000). This is the case in much of Latin America where decentralization strategies and unprecedented community level action have often strengthened local authoritarian enclaves and widened already high regional and household

³ Early research on this phenomenon includes Uphoff (1986), Chambers (1987), Cernea (1988), Esman and Uphoff (1984), Ostrom (1990), and Ostrom, et al. (1993).

inequality.⁴ Under such conditions, decentralization can have the perverse effect of disempowering local actors.

Nevertheless, decentralization will gather even greater momentum in the 21st century where, according to the World Bank, “two main forces will be shaping the world in which development policy will be defined and implemented: globalization (the continuing integration of the countries of the world) and localization (the desire for self-determination and devolution of power)” (1999: 31). Given decentralization’s ambiguous mandate, is this trend toward greater localism and a smaller state in the interest of Latin America’s rural poor? Why have local institutions become so important so quickly to development in Latin America? Is decentralization being pulled down by local actors from below, or pushed down by elites from above? How might we evaluate the pro-poor claims of decentralization – specifically in terms of empowerment? In other words, what conditions make decentralization work? These are the questions this dissertation sets out to answer.

I begin with the **central hypothesis** of this study. *Decentralization tends to strengthen the distribution of power that exists a priori at the local level. Decentralization will tend to reinforce the interests of local elites in local contexts of high inequality, although this is less likely in contexts of relative greater equity. In the first instance, decentralization tends to empower local elites almost exclusively. In the less frequent instance of decentralization under conditions of improving local equity, decentralization tends to empower a wider cross-section of local society. Both outcomes may involve a redistribution of state power, but only the latter is consistent with the conventional, if underspecified, use of local empowerment.*⁵ *The effectiveness of decentralization depends upon acting collectively to challenge local inequality.*

⁴ Latin America is the most unequal region of the world. In 1970, the richest 1 percent of the population earned 363 times more than the poorest 1 percent. By 1995, this gap had increased to 417 times (Londoño and Székely 1997; Székely and Hilgert 1999). In general, the reforms of the 1990s failed to produce any decline in income inequality. (Székely 2001). The World Bank (2003: 35-73) shows that the increase in Latin American inequality since World War II also evident in access to basic services, health status, crime victimization, and political influence.

⁵ The claim to empower is almost boilerplate language in both bottom-up and top-down reform proposals. Empowerment is now part of the core vernacular of peak development institutions, such as the World Bank. First recognized by the Bank in chapters six and seven of the *World Development Report 2000/2001* (2001) as one of the three pillars of poverty reduction, empowerment is now found in the documentation of over 1,800 World Bank-aided projects, and it is the subject of debate and analytic work throughout the development community. See Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) and Narayan (2002) for an overview of the World Bank’s work on measuring and mainstreaming empowerment, or <http://www.worldbank.org/empowerment>.

El Salvador represents a crucial case for answering the above questions and testing this hypothesis. El Salvador experienced a twelve-year civil war, one of the leading causes of which was the unequal distribution of land, income and opportunity. Throughout the war, the Salvadoran countryside was governed by two parallel states, two political-economic systems, and two competing conceptions of citizen empowerment. Insurgent empowerment in zones under the control of the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN) coexisted with counter-insurgent empowerment in zones under the control of the Salvadoran government. Of the various differences in local governance that separated government from insurgent FMLN rule, perhaps the most significant was the dramatic leveling of inequality that characterized the latter.

Decentralized local rule has also emerged in insurgent communities with participatory experiences of decision making and a conspicuous capacity for contentious politics. In contrast, local rule in zones of government control tend to have been associated with top-down experiments of decentralization, where an imposed consensus has relied on widespread acquiescence (Karl 1986). Commitments to equality, participation and contentious advocacy strategies have contributed to the FMLN's dramatic post-war electoral success. While the insurgents have failed to win the Presidency, the former revolutionary party now represents the second political force in the country, and has controlled a plurality of seats in the national assembly and governs in as many as 75 of the country's 262 municipalities, including the capital city of San Salvador.

Sustained co-existence of alternative models of local development within various regions of the same country over the past two decades provides the basis for an important social experiment. Sharply distinct political experiences involving decentralization have influenced competing notions of empowerment that in turn have deeply marked the institutionalization of local authority in NGOs, municipal governments and their articulation with social safety net programs. Thus, the assigned roles, interests and performance of these local actors in decentralized postwar reconstruction will vary according to their respective underlying aggregate political experiences and their associated empowerment strategies. Decentralization has empowered Salvadoran citizens differently depending upon the context of local political experience.

El Salvador is also an important case study of the globalization of local politics. On one hand, under conservative governments El Salvador has advanced more quickly than almost any other Latin American country over the past decade in opening its economy to the free flow of international trade and investment. This transnational dimension is deepened by the fact that nearly 20% of the Salvadoran population now lives abroad. Remittances have a determining effect on local development policy, particularly in rural areas.⁶ At the same time, various transnational movements that mobilized for humanitarian and social justice concerns during the war have also engaged in innovative post-war advocacy campaigns to hold national and international economic actors more accountable in local development projects and national policymaking. Again, wartime experiences have shaped both globalizing and localizing processes in post-war El Salvador.

Because decentralized reconstruction programs were geographically targeted to benefit rural areas, I will focus more narrowly on rural development as a distinct domain of post-war empowerment. Approximately 40% of the Salvadoran population still lives in rural areas, despite massive rural to urban migration over the past 30 years. The rural economy has long subsidized urban development but enjoyed little of the spillover effects. Urban poverty has declined considerably since 1991 while two thirds of the rural population remains below the poverty line. Most development indicators signal a clear urban bias to public and private investment over smaller and intermediate cities (World Bank 2001). Third, in part as a corollary to the economic dependency of the primary cities on rural areas and peoples, recent democratic reforms also emerged in the periphery – a product of political challenges to authoritarian power mounted by rural peoples. Still, these same political freedoms have yet to fully penetrate many rural clientelist enclaves (and arguably the behavior of the urban political elite). For these reasons, any discussion of empowerment must account for political, economic and social change in the Salvadoran countryside, as well as its effect on urban and national development.

This chapter views empowerment as the yardstick for answering the three questions identified at the outset. Why have the institutional solutions to the decentralization's collective action problems gravitated toward local government, NGOs and social safety nets? How well

⁶ Formal and informal transnational institutions for the generation and transfer of remittances (and one might add criminal trafficking of illicit goods), the volume of which now well exceeds foreign direct investment and net export revenues in El Salvador, are analogous to the late medieval insurance institutions of long distance Mediterranean trade studied by Greif (1992).

have local actors (or the state) performed in their respective decentralized roles? Under what conditions does decentralization work in post-war El Salvador? In next section, I define key terms and outline the inequality induced collection action problem at the center of the decentralization debate. In the final section, I elaborate a working definition of my dependent variable – empowerment, as the central evaluative measure of both approaches to decentralization. Following Sen (1989, 1992, 1992), empowerment is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional concept that will be measured in terms of resources, agency and achievements, and at three levels of analysis (community, meso-organizational, macro-societal).⁷

B. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1. Defining Decentralization

Decentralization is defined as the transfer from central to local decision makers some level of authority over taxes, expenditures and regulations.⁸ In practice, decentralization in Latin America has involved shifting some political, fiscal and/or administrative (resources and collection/allocation authority) to lower levels of government, but normally reserves most control over budgets or policy at the highest level. Decentralization makes the most sense in policy areas where uniformity of provision is not required (exceptions include foreign policy, monetary and trade policy, public security) that have no inter-jurisdictional spillover effects (excepting constitutional amendment, income tax administration, educational curricula) and do not depend on economies of scale (state monopsony enterprises). Public works represent one policy that fulfill these criteria and are frequently decentralized. Certain tax measures represent

⁷ The field research for this dissertation, including a 913 person survey and related interviews, was conducted in El Salvador between 1998-1999 and in the U.S. in 1999. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Inter-American Foundation, the Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, and the Fulbright Institute for International Education for field research portion of this project, and an Andrew Mellon Fellowship for the analysis and writing stages of the work.

⁸ Adapted from IDB (1994: 182).

another key area. Following a framework proposed by the UNDP (1993: 67), decentralization can take three forms:

- **Deconcentration** is limited to passing down only administrative discretion to local offices of central government ministries. Although it does result in some dispersal of power, few decisions can be taken without reference to the center.
- **Delegation** involves passing some authority and decision-making powers to local officials, but central government retains the right to overturn local decisions and can, at any time, take these powers back.
- **Devolution** represents the strongest form of decentralization. Devolution involves granting decision-making powers to local authorities and allowing them to take full responsibility without reference back to central government. This includes financial power over expenditures and taxes as well as the authority to design and execute local development projects and programs.

Within the development literature, decentralization implies that significant responsibilities are to be shifted from the state to local governments, non-governmental organizations, civic associations -- to civil society itself, which is assumed to hold a comparative information and accountability advantage in tailoring local services to client needs, deepening participation, and advocating for citizen interests (UNDP 1993; World Bank 2000: 107-124). From a public choice perspective, the inefficiencies and inequities attributed to centralization are best countered by forcing decentralized state institutions and levels of government to compete for citizen votes and taxes.⁹ In some cases, decentralization has been employed by neoliberal reformers as a politically more palatable means for privatization or structural adjustment. Support for local control can also be found in the post-structuralist critique of both markets and developmentalism, promoting instead a cultural politics of self-determination armed with local

⁹ See Tiebout (1956), Musgrave (1959), Buchanan and Tollison (1981). It is doubtful how applicable this model, based upon population mobility to access the best public tax-expenditure offers, is to developing countries such as El Salvador. Given the significance of international migration and remittances, the most appropriate application would involve conceptualizing El Salvador as one local entity in a widely construed transnational labor market.

knowledge and aimed at regulating global property rights.¹⁰ Indeed, decentralization has been promoted in some cases to diffuse social and political tensions, using autonomy in the midst of ethnic or separatist conflict as a way of preserving power.

In effect, all theoretical approaches to decentralization seek to empower citizens to hold the state and themselves more accountable for their own development. The metaphor of a *virtuous circle* is employed by (Tendler 2000: 15) to describe how the state and local networks of civil society organizations and local government become “locked in a two-way dynamic of pressures for accountability that results in improved government.”¹¹

The demonstrated heroic role of civil society organizations in democratic transitions has led the World Bank and other principal institutions to identify civil society as a crucial agent in consolidating democracy and improving economic performance. **Civil society is understood here in its conventional form, as the sphere of voluntary, collective action in the public sphere** (Arato and Cohen 1992). Not reducible to the exclusivity and privatism of the market and the family, nor the will to rule associated with political society, civil society tends to be viewed as a separate mediating sphere, often constituted by local voluntary associations, between economic and political society.

Local institutions and organizations are casually folded into civil society, but two distinctions are necessary. Following definitions set out by North (1990), municipal governments are political institutions because they constitute the formal rules and the informal norms and values that structure governance (a large measure of horizontal interaction) at the local level. NGOs are typically non-profit organizations comprised of groups of individuals bound by a common purpose to achieve their objectives.¹² Municipal governments are formally

¹⁰ See Scott (1985), Escobar (1994), Sachs (1992), Alvarez et al. (1998), and Ferguson (1994). Bardhan refers to this perspective as “anarcho-communitarian” (2005: 106), lumping together the postmodernists, multiculturalists, environmentalists, and indigenists.

¹¹ The virtuous circle metaphor has also been employed by Putnam (1993) and Birdsall, et al. (1995).

¹² Not to conflate substantive differences between non-governmental organizations, unions, cooperatives and civic associations, in this chapter I will use NGOs to identify all four types of local actors. In order to distinguish international NGOs (i.e. donors whose headquarters are located in Northern countries), I use the label - “INGOs”. Federations of unions and cooperatives that are organized primarily around economic or workplace concerns are referred to as *gremios*. *Gremios* are akin to guilds, typically composed of members defined by occupational status, whose primary objective is the promotion and defense of the economic interests of the group. Unions are included in my typology of local actors, even though they usually vanish from the screen of civil society in most Northern schemas.

charged with local rule and NGOs are not, although informal political competition blurs this formal difference. Municipal governments are the primary expression of the state at the local level and possess the formal authority to make binding, non-voluntary decisions about rules (i.e. taxes and spending decisions) (James Thomson 1991). NGOs are considered private, voluntary organizations.

Yet, in matters of decentralized local development, the public-private divide between administrative and economic functions is less than clear. For better or worse, non-governmental organizations are becoming institutionalized in El Salvador, although they operate within rules that are still quite fluid. Discerning the functional differences among local actors requires a detailed treatment of interests, tactics, resources, internal and external structures.

Conceptually, civil society typically encompasses both NGOs and other associations, but not public institutions like municipal government. I use the concept, **mobilization network**, to connote partnerships among local development actors that connect civil society organizations and institutions to the state and market. While sensitive to the varied structural differences between NGOs, civic associations, and municipal governments, mobilization networks direct attention to the types of linkages (vertical and horizontal) that conduct the behavior of individuals and organizations within a locality. The structure of mobilization networks represents part of the overall political opportunity structure for collective action – a qualifying condition for empowerment taken up in more detail in following chapter.

2. The Problem: Decentralization, Inequality, Institutional Capture & the Challenges of Collective Action

While I will use evidence primarily from El Salvador, my theoretical argument is applicable to a more general set of post-conflict, developing country settings.¹³ Effective decentralization assumes that local actors will find it easier to act collectively to hold local institutions more accountable than remote, poorly informed, centralized, often times corrupt agencies. However,

¹³ My argument will have particular relevance for political and economic transitions in post-conflict settings, of which there are over 50 countries experiencing ongoing or recently ended civil wars. See, for example, the World Bank's Fragile States: Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) initiative.

local settings offer no panacea for improved governance or the absence of the ills of centralized rule. Conditions of high inequality and weak democracy often produce a context of intense distributional conflict. Fragmented local interests frustrate collective action and facilitate the political capture of decentralization by local elites. Bardhan (2005:108-109) argues that the idea decentralization may need some protection from its own enthusiasts, whose preoccupation with efficiency in public provision can obscure the fact that “in many situations in developing countries the poor and minorities are oppressed by the local power groups and may look to the central state for protection and relief.”¹⁴ Contrary to theories of fiscal federalism, under these conditions decentralization intended to punish unaccountable or corrupt centralist government can have the unintended result of leaving local actors less empowered than ever. For these reasons, on which I elaborate below, I argue that inequality, asset inequality in particular, represents the major challenge to decentralization (and in turn, rural development) in developing countries.

By collective action problems, I refer to the coordination, management and delivery of local public goods essential for rural development--roads, technical assistance services, power, telecommunications, irrigation, education, public health, sanitation, and security.¹⁵ These public goods are typically a pre-requisite for private investment. In the provision of local public goods, collective action is necessary in the mobilization of money, labor and material resources, the design of rules governing resource use, the monitoring of rule compliance, and the enforcement of sanctions against rule breakers – all of which must be coordinated between jurisdictions of government.

However, nested within this set of conventional tasks is a more intractable problem of dealing with the disproportionate opportunism of local elites that may capture the institutions set up to coordinate the provision of public goods (Rose-Ackerman 1997; Narayan, et al. 2000; Galasso and Ravallion 2000). “The power wielded by the local elites is often in inverse

¹⁴ See also Tanzi (2001) and Von Braun and Grote (2000).

¹⁵ These examples relax the definitional properties of a pure public good which emphasize jointness of supply and non-excludability. Non-excludability means that the benefits of a good are available to a group, whether or not members of the group contribute to the provision of the good. Under certain conditions, we might also add to this list, collective production, storage, commercialization, technology and credit acquisition. Another category of public goods with significant economic implications for the poor are “common pool resources” such as forests, fisheries, grazing lands, and water resources.

proportion to the degree to which they are held accountable for their actions and decision making” (Narayan, 2000). In the policy context of rural development, Bardhan and Mookerjee define political capture as “anti-poor policy biases resulting from low levels of political awareness among poor voters, and lobbying by special interest groups that disproportionately represent the interests of the non-poor” (2000a: 5).¹⁶

Evidence of political capture can be found in targeting failures involving scarce public resources, the withholding of private resources for development, regressive tax policy, lack of political competition, rule breaking in the cooperative use of common pool resources. The effects of political capture are often associated with the undersupply of public goods (education, information, infrastructure, land, economic innovation) typically necessary for sustainable development.¹⁷

The building of local roads that typically improve access to the properties of local elites often reflects both the power and asymmetric information of these elites in influencing the use of scarce public resources for private gain. This is not to deny that local elites also typically own the farms and factories that would produce more and in turn potentially employ more people with better roads. However, political capture involves first and foremost a decision making process that reflects the power disparity between elite and peasant in a rural setting. The rules regarding local resource use, like Przeworski’s definition of democracy, should provide for relatively unpredictable outcomes – such as investments in local roads that do not lead to the properties of local elites. Outcomes that indicate political capture may also involve “anti-poor policy biases” in decisions not taken, such as transparent, accountable governance, enforced equitable and sustainable use of common natural resources or progressive tax reforms.

Bardhan and Mookerjee conclude that the probability for insurmountable collective action problems and political capture is higher in areas of high inequality, precisely the areas targeted as beneficiaries of decentralized post-war reconstruction in El Salvador, but common to much of Latin America (Baland and Platteau *forthcoming*). Latin America is without equal

¹⁶ Political capture might also be understood as an extreme case of “rent seeking” – or the politically rational pursuit by interest groups of economic privileges.

¹⁷ Bardhan (2005: 113) cites the pro-decentralization arguments that attribute European industrial revolution to the fragmented rule, or “parcelized sovereignty” of post-feudal modernity and was the spark for a spiral of technological innovation and competition. In capturing decentralization, elites can effectively derail the investments necessary for human capital and long-term economic progress.

when it comes to inequality, especially inequality in the distribution of land.¹⁸ According to Londoño and Székely (2000), who even when using a conservative consumption based estimate of inequality, find Latin America the most unequal region of the world. Income inequality has not improved in the 1990s and in some countries, like El Salvador, it has worsened. This persistence or deterioration of income distribution is largely due to within-country factors. Where the very rich have lost some ground in income share, gains by upper and middle-income shares have come at the expense of the poor. Lower quintile Latin American incomes are in line with poor people worldwide, which suggest that inequality is due to excessive wealth concentration at the top. Londoño and Székely argue that the worsening of inequality is not due to lack of growth (although perhaps to volatility), but rather to political incapacity to improve distribution.

In contrast, China, India and other Asian cases provide evidence that decentralization is more effective in settings of relatively lower inequality. The decollectivization of agriculture in China and land reform in the Indian states of Kerala and West Bengal, which have both resulted in the highly egalitarian distribution of land, may have also substantially mitigated the risk of political capture by local elites (Mitra and Singh 1999). China's impressive rural industrialization led by local governments and Town-Village Enterprises is attributed to the lack of an excessively strong rural lobby (Oi 1999). Research on conflict in the management of irrigation systems in particular seems to demonstrate the clear benefit of low land inequality for the success of decentralization (Bardhan 2005; Lam 1998; Wade 1981, 1997). In each of these examples, decentralization has worked not because the state has withered away, but rather that the structure obstacles, such as land inequality, have been mitigated by a strong state beforehand.

Solutions to local impunity, be they accommodative or contentious, represent an embedded set of collective action strategies upon which the more conventional questions of coordinating the provision of public goods depends. Conventional coordination of public goods and challenging impunity are thus two faces of the same collective action problem in highly unequal societies.

¹⁸ World Bank (2003), Deininger and Squire (1996, 1998), IDB (1998), Székely and Hilgert (1999), Székely (2001a).

Inequality exacerbates collective action in a variety of ways. At a macro-level, cross-national and cross-sectional analyses have demonstrated how aggregate inequality intensifies distributional conflicts that also limit the capacity for collective action.

- Inequality, particularly asset inequality, has been shown to reduce potential economic growth through inefficient use and underinvestment in natural and human resources, thus reducing the potential supply of incentives for collective action.¹⁹
- Inequality also ensures that the growth that is attained does not translate into an equal share of benefits for the poorest – exacerbating further the problem of mobilizing the poor. At such high levels of inequality, the linkage between growth and poverty has a low elasticity -- growth does not necessarily reduce poverty. In fact, if Latin America had the same GDP but with the income distribution of any other region of the world, poverty would be cut by at least in half.²⁰ Székely (2001a) has shown for Latin America that high income inequality may reduce the benefits of growth to the poor by one half to two thirds. Poverty is largely a distributive problem where gains due to growth are captured disproportionately by the rich.
- Inequality increases mutual distrust, thus making consensus around policy shifts in the face of crises difficult or impossible and contributing to conflict.²¹ Latin America's inability to implement meaningful fiscal reforms in the face of crumbling legitimacy of public institutions and the package of neoliberal reforms is but one example.

At the micro-level, collective action problems may be aggravated by two classes of free rider problems – each of which is compounded by inequality. The first is where collective action

¹⁹ This line of argumentation is associated with Kuznets (1955), Alesina and Rodrik (1994), Persson and Tabellini (1994), Perotti (1996), Benabou (1996), Ravallion (1997), Bardhan, Bowles and Gintis (1998), Squire and Zou (1998), Bourguignon and Verdier (2000), and Deininger and Olinto (2000), but see Deininger and Squire (1998) and Barro (2000) for a summary of arguments finding no statistical relationship between inequality and growth without disaggregating for certain country clusters.

²⁰ Londono and Székely (2000). Similar inequality-growth-poverty reduction arguments can be found in Adelman and Morris (1973), Birdsall and Londono (1997), Foster and Székely (2001). For research that suggests a one to one relationship between income generation and poverty reduction, regardless of inequality see Dollar and Kraay (2000).

²¹ Bardhan (2005), Bardhan, Bowles and Gintis (2000), Midlarsky (1999) Knack and Keefer (1997, 2000)

breaks down over how the costs of change will be shared. The second is an asymmetrical bargaining problem – where collective action breaks down over how the benefits will be shared. In the former, as the group size increases, monitoring and enforcement costs are higher, and the probability of unsanctioned opportunism is raised, therefore lowering the ex ante incentives for participation.²² In the latter, some actors may not participate because they are not sure about the final distribution of the benefits (Ostrom, et al. 1993). In other words, weaker actors may withhold their contribution under suspicion that the distribution of benefits will be captured by more powerful actors (Baland and Platteau 1996; Dayton-Johnson and Bardhan 2002). Conversely, powerful actors may veto a more efficient collective arrangement if the new arrangement threatens their current mechanisms for extracting rent or if absolute gains imply relative loss (Robinson 2003).

Both classes of collective action problems are exacerbated by high intra-community inequality, weak institutions and distributional conflict – contributing to the distortion of decentralization through local institution capture. The classic example of asymmetric bargaining obstacles to collective action involves the failure of land markets to resolve the highly inefficient state of asset concentration (Binswanger, Deininger and Feder 1995; Griffin, Rahman Kahn and Ickowitz 2000; Deininger, 2003; Sauer and Barros, 2002; Carter and Salgado 2001). Except in some plantation crops, economies of scale in agricultural production in many developing countries are insignificant (Netting 1993; Conroy, Murray and Rossett 1996).

Land markets in Latin America have generally failed to redistribute land toward the more efficient small or middle strata farmers. Tax laws and their lax enforcement motivate large landholders to hold land even while leaving it idle or underutilized despite land scarcity among poor farmers. Large landowners have also vigorously resisted forceful land redistribution in order to preserve a profitable livelihood, speculative future opportunities, political access, and status (Baland and Robinson 2003). Leasing in Latin America, another potentially more efficient alternative, is well below the developing country average due to fears that tenants may demand more secure occupancy rights (De Janvry 1998). Market failures in credit routinely contribute to the inability of small farmers to purchase adequate land, underinvestment in existing small

²² Olson (1965). To be more precise, the marginal benefit in the distribution of a public good by a person's contribution, does not outweigh the cost of contributing – and the benefits of the public good would most likely be available anyhow.

farming plots, and the higher probability of losing those plots to larger farmers in times of economic distress. The unplanned collective action strategies influenced by land markets (and expropriative redistribution in many cases) have been thwarted by the asymmetrical bargaining power of landed interests (Browning 1971; White 1973).

It is possible, as Olson suggests, that inequality could in fact resolve the free rider - collective action problems in the provision of rural public goods. The tendency toward higher inequality increases the likelihood that a single, dominant actor can provide the public good unilaterally in exchange for some reciprocal benefit from individual users (e.g., sharecropping tenure arrangements). This solution adequately describes the expansion of publicly subsidized commodity marketing programs and rural infrastructure (highways, feeder roads, irrigation and flood control infrastructure, storage facilities and ports) on El Salvador's Pacific coast during the post-World War II expansion of cotton production. High concentration of land ownership reduced the costs of collective action (lobbying the state) by a small group of landlords. However, the landed elites represented the primary source of opportunism (property rights violations) in the first place and assured that benefits would be captured. Therefore, the skewed benefits with this provision of rural investment in the absence of asset redistribution produced the perverse outcome of reinforced inequality.

Despite their obvious inefficiencies, the strength of vested interests allows dysfunctional local institutions to persist. Various cases of decentralized public works and common pool resource management failures illustrate these factors at work.²³

There are many potential strategies for resolving both types of collective action problems – all of which I group together below under *Agency*. Most solutions involving local institutions entail various combinations of selective incentives, coercion, entrepreneurial activism and social norms (Ostrom 1990). Lichbach (1996: 18-24) has classified these strategies into four broad types – Market, Contract, Community and Hierarchy.²⁴

²³ One common example is the difficulty of holding large landowners accountable for water use by smaller irrigation system members (Wade 1987; Dayton-Johnson 1998).

²⁴ I prefer to use strategies instead of Lichbach's choice of "solution".

This typology of collective action shown in Figure 1.1 is divided along two dimensions.²⁵ The first dimension is ontological, or in other words whether one might believe that collective action may be spontaneous among individuals (Contract, Market) or is contingent upon pre-existing institutions, social structures or social ties (Hierarchy, Community). The second dimension is deliberative. People involved in collective action may be dividing strategic approaches are planned versus unplanned. Lichbach suggests that the Market CA strategies to achieving social order (insurgent or counter-insurgent) may be thought of as a baseline, while the three alternative sets of solutions may be viewed as the context in which the baseline model is placed.

Market strategies represent uncoordinated choices within the given constraints of an invisible hand. As illustrated in the case of land markets, Market CA strategies assume that among isolated individuals, there is little or no engagement in social planning (such as alternatives to or conditions on individual private property rights). Market approaches tend to emphasize raising benefits and lowering the costs to CA, and hence, are most consistent with the core rationalist assumptions of uncoordinated voluntarist actions that flow from narrow self-interested motivations. **Contract** strategies represent planned choices to shape constraints over otherwise spontaneous actions. Contract strategies assume individuals that find ways to bargain over the mutual agreements needed to solve their CA problems. The forging of solidarity or pragmatic association among secondary (formal) groups is the basis for cooperation. Lichbach identifies three types of contract strategies: establishment of self-governing institutions, contingent cooperation and mutual exchange – all of which rely upon a concerted change of the context in which individual strategies are pursued. **Community** strategies assume that local norms and common values render planning unnecessary, and these norms and social ties facilitate cooperation. Community approaches are unplanned, but contingent upon the existence or creation of a common belief system. Informal primary groups and mechanistic patterns of solidarity are the basis for cooperation. **Hierarchy** (force) assumes that pre-existing institutions make deliberate efforts to solve CA problems through some form of organization of the potential cooperators. Hierarchy best describes the type of CA strategy that was most prevalent during the

²⁵ Lichbach's typology builds from the previous work of Taylor (1992) and is consistent with other similar classifications of the logical forms of collective action proposed by Hirschman (1970), Kriesi (1995), Tarrow (1994), and McAdam (1996).

war (under both government-military and FMLN command), as well as elite-peasant pre-war relations on most haciendas.

	Ontology	
Deliberation	Contingent Order Institutions, Structures, Social Ties	Spontaneous Order Individuals
Planned	<i>Hierarchy (force)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imposing, monitoring and enforcing agreements (state repressive capacity) • Selective benefits/disincentives • Locating entrepreneurs (organizers) • Locating patrons (elite access & stability) • Reorganizing-decentralize • Increasing competition among allies 	<i>Contract (bargaining)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-government • Contingent cooperation (Tit-for-Tat) • Mutual Exchange
Unplanned	<i>Community (political culture)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap other regardingness, altruism, solidarity, fairness • Build from self-actualizing political experience • Build Bandwagon – traditional organizing • Increase mutual expectations 	<i>Market (baseline)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase benefits, lower costs • Increase resources • Improve probability of winning or making a difference • Improve productivity of tactics • Increase enemy competition • Increase risk taking • Use incomplete information • Restrict/promote exit • Reduce supply or change type of PG/public bad

Figure 1.1 Agency: Solutions to the Collective Action Problem

In the case of El Salvador, I will discuss the origins, the war-time shifts and the post-war implications of CA strategies that have been most influential in insurgent and counter-insurgent municipalities. As Lichbach argues, both the FMLN and the government employed a repertoire of strategies to promote or prevent collective dissent. For example, hierarchical CA strategies of force may best describe the CA strategy that best explains the transition from an authoritarian, unfair labor regime that prevailed on most large rural farms in the pre-war period to the imposition of military rule in government controlled zones during the war. In contrast, several currents of community CA strategies that built upon pre-existing communal solidarities (progressive Catholicism, rural unions, revolutionary organizing) were influential in explaining

the origins of the FMLN insurgency. Insurgent organizing approaches then gravitated toward a combination of hierarchy and contract strategies during the war.²⁶

Both insurgent and counter-insurgent CA strategies that prevailed before and during the war shifted again during peacetime. Government-military hierarchy has tended to shift toward both contract and market strategies. FMLN contract strategies have bifurcated into both community and hierarchy (see Figure 1.3 below).

Lichbach emphasizes that no single type of strategy is a sufficient explanation for collective action (1996: Chapter 7). Market CA strategies alone are acutely susceptible to failure under conditions of high inequality, as illustrated by the poor performance of land markets in Latin America. Markets are logically incomplete because the origins of preferences and resource endowments cannot be explained. Contract, community and hierarchy all represent contexts that attempt to partially fill this gap. However each of these is, in turn, flawed as a unitary explanation for CA. Norms can be those of the incumbent power and may be imposed, contract enforcement and monitoring is ultimately contingent on some prior structural arrangement among the actors, and the coercion of hierarchy is insufficient for the long-term maintenance of social stability.

Contract presupposes some Hierarchy capable of enforcing compliance. Hierarchy presupposes some prior unexplained collective action to form the organizations that coerce cooperative behavior. The prior collective action may have rested on pre-existing Community norms. Thus, any combination of all CA strategies are implicated and then may be involved to contest local inequality - a crucial condition for making decentralization work in post-war El Salvador.

Democratic reforms in much of Latin America would suggest that greater political competition at the local level would provide a possible mechanism for challenging inequality. However, the troubling persistence of inequality in Latin America despite the advance of electoral democracy infers a more complex relationship. If inequality is high enough, the rich

²⁶ However, Hierarchy, Contract or Community CA strategies governing landlord-peasant relations were not mutually exclusive alternatives or variations on Market strategies. Though represented only about 10% of the rural occupations and largely eliminated by export agriculture, various pre-war sharecropper contracts (i.e. *colono*) were widely preferred by many peasants over the market nature of rural labor relations today. Similarly, Christian base Community CA strategies promoted by progressive Catholic priests and catechists were grafted onto hierarchical religious men's orders, such as the Gentlemen of Christ the King.

will have sufficient political clout to capture locally elected office and block redistributive reforms/mechanisms or steer them from their intended target.²⁷

By contrast, the most effective land reforms in Latin America have involved often very undemocratic state expropriation of land, often triggered by collective violence against landlords or a repressive state (Riedinger et al. 2001; Griffin et al, 2000). Democratic reforms themselves have also involved highly conflictive processes of bottom-up pressure to remove authoritarian rule at the national level. Despite regular elections, local power in many rural areas of Latin America often still rests with unelected local elites. The positive effect of democracy on holding local leaders accountable may be conditioned upon a prior or simultaneous reduction in asset inequality. Both processes may be dependent upon the capacity for contentious, collective action in settings of high inequality – an assumption that would require a broadening of our most conventional conceptions of empowerment.

²⁷ In his analysis of six developing countries, Blair (2000) has argued that there is little evidence that democratic local government can do much to reduce poverty in the short run.

C. EMPOWERMENT

As the dependent variable of this study, the final section of this chapter will elaborate a working definition of empowerment. Empowerment implies the transfer of power to the powerless, which is consistent with the central presumption of decentralization – an unequal initial distribution of power resources. Empowerment can be a private and individual process as well as a public and collective one. Because the focus here on rural development emphasizes the capacity for local actors to resolve collective action problems in order to contest inequality, it is the latter component that I contend is most decisive.

Considering the multiple paths to solving collective action problems and the contested notions of how power is transferred, no single empirical measure of empowerment will be satisfactory. This encompassing quality suggests why empowerment is infrequently cited in the political science literature.²⁸ Yet, upon identifying the constituent elements of empowerment (participation, efficacy, economic well-being, social ties, physical security, health, etc.), the links to several vital cross-disciplinary research programs becomes evident.²⁹ Still, the interconnections between these various elements of empowerment remain relatively unexplored.³⁰

Drawing from the work of Amartya Sen (1992, 1999) I propose an empirical measurement of empowerment that requires the simultaneous attention to three dimensions - resources, agency and achievements, and three levels of analysis (individual-community, organizational, society). After sketching the transition within the development literature toward a more capital resource-based evaluative approach to decentralization, I will address each dimension of the empowerment process. I will then propose how each dimension will be measured within the community, across organizations and across society.

²⁸ Recent attempts to measure empowerment in the past decade have focused on single dimensions, such as political representation, see Gilliam (1996) and Bobo and Gilliam (1990)

²⁹ I have in mind the recent theoretical work of Lichbach and Zuckerman (1997), Evans (1996), Putnam (1993), and Ostrom (1990), but specifically in the area of rural development, the asset or capital based proposals of the World Bank (2001) and Narayan (2002), see also Moser (1999), de Janvry, et al. (2000), Attanasio and Székely (2001), Chambers (1983, 1987, 1993, 1997) Bebbington (1999), Cruikshank (1999) and Scoones (1998).

³⁰ The interdisciplinary nature of this research builds on the important theoretical work of Sen (1999), but also draws on Bourdieu (1971); and recent work by Bebbington (1999), Kabeer (1999), and Scoones (1998)

1. Empowerment by Invitation or through Conflict

Empowerment has become the stated goal of a surprisingly wide range of interventions.³¹ So diverse, in fact, are these empowerment activities, that the term has been associated with many competing definitions and consequently little conceptual precision.³² Since its first use in association with rural development, the idea has acquired two very different meanings in Latin America in the area of rural development.³³ The first meaning is associated with a model of social change that might be called *empowerment through conflict*. This model is derived from the notion of power as a zero-sum resource, redistributed, as Tarrow argues, “when ordinary people join forces in contentious confrontation with elites, authorities and opponents” (1994:1). A more positive-sum notion of *empowerment by invitation*, is derived from what pluralists like Putnam (1993) describe as the rational pursuit of “self-interest properly understood” through more informal and consensual forms of local civic activity such as soccer leagues, bird clubs and choir societies, and in turn, through political participation.³⁴ In the view of the former, decentralization is a bottom-up, potentially conflictive process where local institutions challenge the structures of inequality. In the latter, decentralization involves a top-down but consensual process where local institutions seek to expand power even though relative distributional imbalances may remain unchanged. I associate the former model with the insurgent methods of the FMLN, and the latter with the counter-insurgent methods of the Salvadoran government – although neither offers a perfect fit. Neither approach is purely top-down nor bottom-up,

³¹ Some areas where empowerment has been identified as the dependent variable include: 1. Civic renewal & community action, 2. Social work, 3. Alternative rural development, 4. Mental health, disability, and rehabilitative health care counseling, 5. Faith and spirituality, 6. Workplace employee management and organization, 7. Feminist/gender/subaltern politics, 8. Consumer advocacy and, of course 9. Reinventing government, deregulation and decentralization.

³² The Heinz Corporation, a Pittsburgh based multinational recently marketed a new brand of “kid-friendly” green ketchup upon the premise that, “it’s empowered [children] in a way they have always desired but haven’t had an opportunity. It’s a ketchup they can call their own.” *Pittsburgh City Paper*, Vol. 10:29, July 19-26, 2000, pg. 4.

³³ In Spanish or Portuguese, the word empowerment has no direct translation.

³⁴ This typology and the phrase, empowerment by invitation, were both borrowed from Joel Handler (1996: 133).

consensual or conflictive, as the gaps between claims and practice in the municipal case studies will clearly illustrate. Nevertheless, these two competing interpretations for how decentralization empowers people will frame my analysis of the goals, tactics and outcomes of decentralized development in El Salvador.

As early as the 1960s an empowerment by invitation approach to rural development in Latin America was heavily influenced by pluralist notions of power. This standard definition of power assumes that people will act on grievances by participating within relatively open decision making arenas. Parsons (1971), for example, argued that empowerment is vocality, achieved through the ballot box or communications media, where critical resources are infinitely expandable. Power is assumed to be widely dispersed, fluid and cumulative. The emphasis is on absolute gains rather than shifts in relative distribution. Therefore, observable inaction is not constrained by power or oppression, but explained by individual apathy, alienation, low political efficacy or the silent consent among unequals of their inequality (Dahl 1961; Polsby 1963).

Collective action is framed by pluralist conceptions of power from a Market strategy perspective, bounded by the existing procedures and institutions for mediating political conflict. Power is exercised through conventional strategies of joining coalitions, participating in town meetings, voting to delegate authority to broader decision making institutions, based on the claim that these existing deliberative spaces are essentially open and fair. Self-restraint is justified on the danger of institutional overload (Huntington, 1975: 112-115). Therefore, collective action is framed by pluralists as limited by the required (and presumed natural) apathy of marginal groups, whose eventual inclusion involves the exchange of social mobility for self-restraint.³⁵ Inherent to this model is the assumption that regime stability entails a recruitment of civil society associations to absorb citizen energy at the local level, freeing public matters of governance to elites.

Empowerment is conceived here as process of consensus that promises a positive-sum distribution of power resources. It is assumed that both the interests of the powerful and the powerless converge around a particular goal, yet agree that the powerless cannot achieve the goal

³⁵ This rationale for acceptable non-participation was labeled by Almond and Verba (1963) as a “parochial culture” Exclusion was therefore an individual choice, not an institutional or environmental pathology. David Truman (1951: 51) said “We do not need to account for a totally inclusive interest, because one does not exist Huntington’s limitation also applies to the types of “non-political” institutions (the family, the university, the military, business, private associations, government bureaucracies) where democratic procedures are not always appropriate (1968: 75).

by themselves. The required technology must be transferred from the powerful to the powerless. The powerful provide inputs (guidance and material resources) to invite the participation of powerless in exchange for observing the conventional rules of conduct. Non-participation is rooted in individual apathy or alienation, rather than blocked by structural barriers.

Three historical stages of empowerment by invitation can be identified in the post-war period of U.S. – Latin America relations. In each stage, the cold war competition between the localism promoted by U.S. pluralists and encompassing ideological projects of the Left encouraged the counter-insurgent recruitment of civil society by the Right. The civic culture represented an alternative to communism's dangerous political mobilization by its focus on local interests. The U.S. Alliance for Progress promoted rural development in Latin America based on a positive-sum notion of power as a direct response to the zero-sum model that emerged after the Cuban revolution. Stabilizing consensus also motivated the Community Action Programs of the U.S. War on Poverty and the poverty elimination programs of the World Bank under McNamara (1970-1978).³⁶ In the 1980s, low intensity warfare, the rise of structural adjustment reforms in Latin America and the deregulation reforms in the U.S. signaled a second stage of top-down stabilizing empowerment initiatives. Civic action, refugee relief, social safety nets, decentralization of public service provision and flexible workplace management programs sought to tap the entrepreneurial spirit of self-reliance at the grassroots and the shop floor.³⁷ These programs also were intended to fight insurgent movements on the job and in the countryside as well as mollify resistance to privatizing the populist state and the global mobility of capital flows.

In the 1990s, the advance of global capital market deregulation and state privatization has been accompanied by Empowerment Zones³⁸ in the U.S., and decentralized local development

³⁶ For U.S. War on Poverty, see Kramer (1969), Marris and Rein (1967), and for a timeline for rural development programs of the World Bank, see Kapur (1997).

³⁷ Representative literature in each of these areas includes Herrenkohl (1999), Argyris (1998), Champy (1995), Schultz (1994), Karsten, (1994), Frey (1993); Davidson and Malone (1992), Vogt and Murrell (1990) and Peters (1995) for New Management-workplace deregulation; for Civic Action Programs see Mondros and Wilson (1994), Hanna (1994), Craig and Mayo (1995), Temaner Jenkins and Bennett (1999), Weissberg (1999), McNulty (1999), Jenkins and Bennett (1999), Morissey (2000); Sen (1994) UNDP (1995), Kabeer (1999, 2001, 2002) for Gender; and Tendler (1998), and Cornia (2001) for Social Safety Net Programs.

³⁸ Beginning in 1995, the Clinton administration granted \$100 million plus tax incentives over 10 years to six urban areas identified as intransigent high poverty areas and designated as "Empowerment Zones" (Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia-Camden). In addition, 65 smaller "Enterprise Communities" were

programs in Latin America. Under mounting international criticism, the IFIs launched unprecedented efforts to make poverty assessment more participatory, transparent and increasingly sensitive to non-economic factors. While the new framework has softened the terminology and seeks to invite dissenting local actors to the decision making table, vital aspects of development policy (fiscal and monetary conditions of structural adjustment, social impact conditionality prior to structural adjustment loans, heavily tied and declining levels of official development assistance and restricted access for poor country goods in rich country markets) remain off the agenda.³⁹ The mainstreaming of empowerment (by invitation) is complete now that the World Bank has adopted the term as one of the principal indicators of program effectiveness. In recognition of the durability of inequality, empowerment by invitation now emphasizes the acquisition of human capital and access to productive assets by the powerless. However, this definition limits agency to conventional, individualist, self-help and market-based strategies that severely condition its use as a viable performance standard.⁴⁰

Structuralist or post-developmental conceptions of zero-sum power suggest an empowerment through conflict strategy that has also evolved in competition with its positive-sum counterpart. According to this challenge to the pluralist view, power is concentrated among elites who protect their privileged decision making authority through agenda setting measures (Alinsky, 1971; Bachrach and Baratz 1970; Parenti 1970; Gaventa 1982). High inequality suggests that any policy consensus around absolute gains serves to obscure an inherent conflict of interests framed by the relative gap that separates the powerful and the powerless. Assumptions of zero-sum power imply that a fundamental redistribution is necessary before, as

funded, 33 of which are rural. EZ Program goals are poverty alleviation, empowerment, leveraging of private sector investment, reinventing government, although program evaluations have focused more on citizen participation, rather than actual job creation, investment or poverty reduction as indicators of success, see Craig and Mayo, 1995; Jenkins and Bennett, 1999; Morissey, 2000.

³⁹ In 1990, the World Bank launched a Learning Group on Participatory Development and promised high level commitment that led to new project procedures and has culminated in several new consultative mechanisms, including formal participatory poverty assessments (PRSPs & CDFs) ongoing in some 20 developing countries (World Bank, 1994, 1995, 2000). Still, internal Bank social assessments (safeguard policies) are uneven, under funded and often have no weight of enforcement, which in turn have perpetuated the status quo of unaccountability.

⁴⁰ In a keynote speech, World Bank vice-president Nicolas Stern defined empowerment of the poor as (1) enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision making, (2) removing the barriers – political, legal and social – that work against particular groups and (3) building the assets of poor people to enable them to engage effectively in markets (Stern, 2001: 39).

pluralists suggest, critical power resources become “infinitely expansive.” Conventional participatory mechanisms and institutions are implicated in the exclusion of the poor, less informed, and less well connected members of society. Empowerment through conflict involves confrontational strategies to acquire power resources from the powerful, challenge legitimizing symbols and dismantle other barriers to inclusion that are set up and maintained by the powerful. Empowerment, according to Bourdieu (1977) involves breaking the established rules of politeness, or “habitus”. “Changing habitus” by definition disempowers those who operate by the rules of an older habitus undergoing replacement. While some weight is given to the powerless having accepted the legitimacy of the powerful as an explanation of non-participation, greater emphasis is placed on the fear of reprisal, cooptation, or the lack of awareness of how to work the system.

While there is no direct translation of empowerment in Spanish or Portuguese, Freire’s notion of *conscientização* comes closest, loosely translated as consciousness raising (Freire 1973). Rowlands (1997: 145) points out that in later work, “Freire criticizes any notion of empowerment as an individual phenomenon, or even as a community or social activity; rather he insists on empowerment as ‘social class empowerment’: ‘The question of social class empowerment involves how the working class, through its own experiences, its own construction of culture, engages itself in getting political power’ (Freire and Shore 1987: 112). The base community movement that emerged from 1967 Catholic bishop’s conference in Medellín adapted Freire’s methods to the collective interpretation of biblical scripture to analyze local problems and search for solutions. Through both influences, empowerment has clearly carried a collective, emancipatory meaning that might be more closely associated with the contingent and institutional CA strategies of Community or Hierarchy in Lichbach’s typology.

Three stages of empowerment through conflict may also be traced to initially distinct, but converging events in North and South America. Unionization, civil rights, anti-war, welfare rights, and identity movements all represented variations of the empowerment through conflict model in the U.S. through the early 1970s (Piven and Cloward 1980). In Latin America during this period, guerrilla insurgencies that followed the Cuban revolution were influenced both by the prospect for international Communism as well as by localized movements associated with Freire’s adult literacy methodology and the Liberation Theology work of the Catholic Church.

In the 1980s, social movements and NGOs in both the South and the North resisted the interventionist strategy of the U.S. in Central America and elsewhere, pushed for democratizing and other rights-based reforms and protested some of the most intolerable structural adjustment policies. As noted above, NGOs and civil society organizations have collaborated at an international level to negotiate the labyrinthine structures of the multilateral banks and engage the adoption of significant reforms (debt relief, transparency, social and environmental impact assessments, and new mechanisms of civil society participation). However, in response to a perceived disconnect between analysis, core policies and the increasing global economic insecurity in the 1990s, transnational advocacy movements have also stepped up confrontational pressure against unaccountable multinational corporations, multilateral banks and OECD leaders to resolve the growing gap between rich and poor.⁴¹ In all three periods, empowerment through conflict has combined conventional and contentious politics to challenge inequality.

2. Toward a General Understanding of Empowerment

The mainstreaming of empowerment has not prevented contention over the term's very meaning. While pluralists and structuralists contest the notion of power and the range of political actions that flow from it, there is a core relationship that is common to both that involves resources, agency and achievements. In the last section of this chapter, I will propose a working definition of empowerment that is compatible with both the consensus and conflict models.

Consider Robert Chambers definition of empowerment:

Empowerment means that people, especially poorer people, are enabled to take more control over their lives, and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive assets as one key element. Decentralization and empowerment enable local people to exploit the diverse complexities of their own conditions, and to adapt to rapid change. (Chambers 1993: 10)

For Chambers, empowerment is greater local control, achieved in part through the ownership and control of assets. We might expand the specification of productive assets to

⁴¹ The evolution of the World Social Forum is the most recent expression of this global movement, see Keck and Sikkink (1998).

include various forms of capital (economic, human, social and political). Together these power resources serve as the levers of control. However, Chambers argues that ownership of these assets is insufficient. A farmer may have access to land and produce crops for sale, but fail to convert these goods into surplus revenue due to the unfair structure of the market. Producers of basic grains contend with highly subsidized rich country export dumping that artificially drives down prices, legitimized by an imposed structure of global trading rules. A student may acquire education but fail to convert that human capital into income if no commensurable jobs are available or if structural barriers prevent the labor market from working fairly. Empowerment involves the exploitation of assets to convert them into valued resources that help secure a better livelihood under changing conditions.

In a similar vein, Sen (1982, 1992, 1999) develops a comprehensive approach to measuring empowerment that distinguishes the possession of power resources (capital) from effective use (agency), the latter of which facilitates the reproduction or accumulation of capital, or in the opposite, leads to a deficit. Consistent with Sen's argument, Kabeer (1999) defines empowerment as *the ability to make strategic life choices about what we value and want*, what Sen refers to as 'freedom' (Sen 1992: 64). Empowerment has three core dimensions – Resources, Agency and Achievements. Resources are the pre-conditions to choice – the control levers of sustained capital acquisition or reproduction. Agency is effective resource use, or “the ability to define one's goals and act upon them” (Kabeer 1999: 439). Agency describes how resources are then converted into achievements – defined by Sen as valued ways of being and doing that a person has managed to accomplish. Through agency, resources are converted into achievements that we might associate with a dignified life – fulfillment of basic needs, a satisfying occupation, elemental political rights, physical security and the ability to cope with unforeseen shocks.

Here, it is important to emphasize that human diversity mediates the path from resources to achievements and to underscore the distinction between achievements and freedom to achieve. What a person is observed to have achieved may not reflect what they aspire to achieve. Someone may choose a frugal lifestyle but have alternative options. Others live in poverty against their own wishes but have few alternatives. Differences in achievement may not reflect different resource stocks, but instead be due to principled differences in personal goals. Differential achievement may also be due to conversion rates that vary according to genetic

disparities, group-specific parameters (i.e. gender, age, etc.) or context (level of inequality). Returns to investment in human capital are in part a function of the innate capabilities of the student but also of the structural equity of employment opportunities.⁴² The diversity dilemma for assessing the impact of inequality of power resources on decentralized rural development is moderated somewhat by focusing on minimally acceptable achievements that would nonetheless have a tremendous effect on most poor countries.

Ability to achieve (freedom), rather than achievement itself, is the most stringent test for assessing empowerment. However, assessments of freedom have to be “constructed on the basis of presumptions” about the goals to which a person aspires as well as the range of actual choices (Sen 1992: 52). Given the practical problems with informational availability, I will settle here for relating empowerment to observed and reported achievements. Inferences about the extent of freedom will be contingent upon the information available in addition to observed achievements. The proposed empowerment model is shown in Figure 1.2.

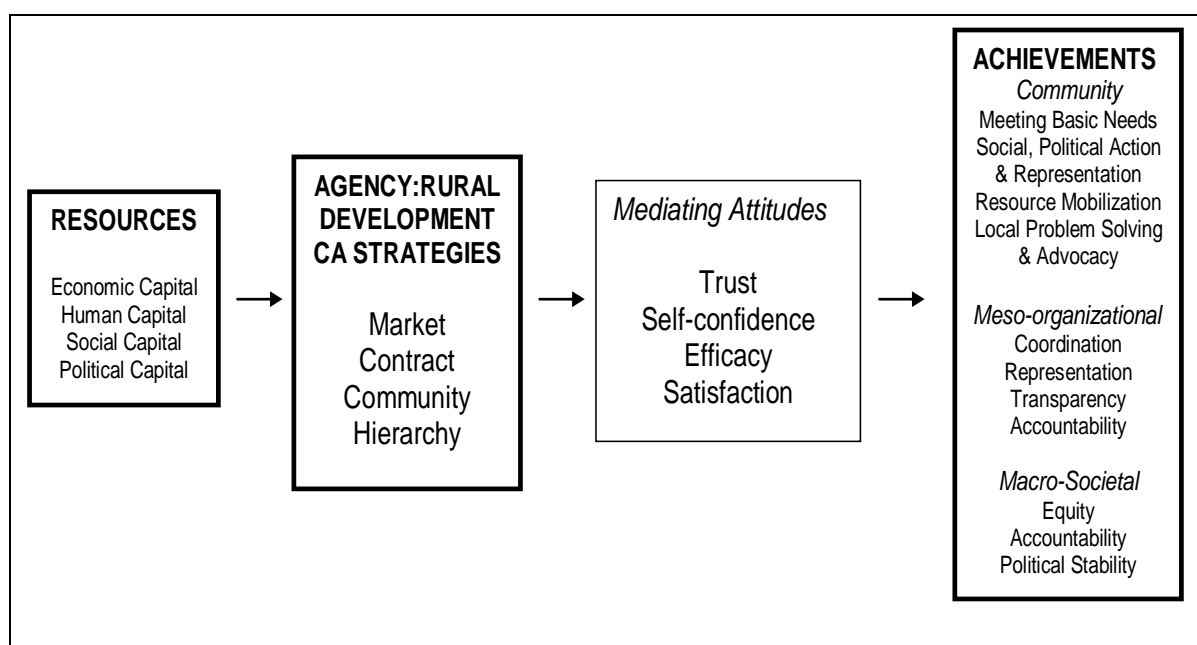


Figure 1.2 A General Model of Empowerment

⁴² Research by Birdsall, Ross and Sabot (1995) have shown that the payoffs to investment in basic education are less in countries with high income inequality than in others. East Asian development has shown that education investments must be coupled with employment opportunities to complete the virtuous circle. Arias, et al. (2002) show that race explains a significant variation in returns to education in Brazil, in part suggesting why this virtuous circle is incomplete there.

Most welfare analyses compare initial resource endowments with eventual achievements. However, Sen argues, “equalizing ownership of resources or holdings of primary goods need not equalize the substantive freedoms enjoyed by different persons, since there can be significant variations in the *conversion* of resources and primary goods into freedoms” (1992: 33, emphasis in original). Two people with similar incomes may have very different means for converting that income into desired nutrition, status, political representation, leisure, or security from escapable death. Resources and agency are therefore indivisible. Together, they constitute what Sen (1985) refers to as capabilities: the potential that people have for preserving and expanding resources, and converting them into desired livelihoods, of achieving valued ways of ‘being and doing’.⁴³ Achievements, then, refer to the particular ways of being and doing which are, in fact, realized by different individuals in specific contexts.

a. Resources

Power resources can be sub-divided into four types of capital: economic, human, social and political (see Figure 1.4 below for detailed components at each level of analysis). *Economic capital* refers to material wealth resources such as financial capital or technology. This might include the income, credit/debt, savings, remittances and other household or farm assets, such as livestock, infrastructure, production equipment and technologies that are essential for the pursuit of any livelihood strategy.⁴⁴ Economic capital is the basis of all other capital – the standard for conversion of any other power resources. Of this subset of economic capital, land ownership and land distribution are two of the most significant.

⁴³ This model simplifies Sen’s proposal by focusing on functionings (or well-being), rather than the extent of freedom to choose that a person enjoys beyond the observed choice itself (sense of well-being).

⁴⁴ Bebbington (1999) distinguishes a specific type of economic capital as *natural capital* – defined as the natural resource stocks (soil, water, air genetic resources, etc.) and environmental services (hydrological cycle, pollution sinks etc.) from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived. The differentiation is based on a concern for sustainability and capital’s function as an environmental resource for which values and prices are not clearly defined by present markets. To the extent that this specific form of asset influences the meeting of basic needs (water scarcity, harmful contamination) rather than the level of demand for the amenity of living in a pleasing environment, it may add important analytical leverage to this type of framework. However the lack of information necessary to distinguish economic from natural capital forces me to settle for the less disaggregated concept.

Although economic capital is a necessary resource for empowerment, it is not sufficient. Evidence of wealthy societies has shown that money cannot necessarily buy well-being if what is valued is family, friendship, cultural expression, work satisfaction or other forms of non-commercial leisure (Easterlin 1974, 1995; Inglehart 1990; Lane 1993; Oswald 1997). While the ranking of these values may differ cross-culturally, especially for developing countries, we may assume that empowered individuals, communities, organizations and societies acquire stocks of non-economic resources. The most common of these is *human capital*. By human capital I mean the education, skills, knowledge, good health and physical ability to labor, important for the successful pursuit of different livelihood strategies (Schultz 1963; Becker 1994).

Another complement to economic resources is *social capital*, although there is much less agreement about its meaning. Bourdieu (1986: 248) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group. Putnam elaborates on this group membership definition of social capital by referring to the “trust, norms, and networks that improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (1993: 167). In later work, Putnam infers norms or reciprocity and trust from estimates of associational density (1995, 2000). Woolcock (1998, 2000) further subdivides social capital as a network property into some combination of several types: communitarian bonding (horizontal ties within groups) bridging (horizontal ties across groups), and linking (vertical ties between state and society). Examples of these types of networks might include labor sharing arrangements, micro-credit systems, producer or marketing cooperatives and federations, communal development associations, and migration networks. They are both informal and formal, reside within a single village or extend across villages and to the state. Those networks that extend beyond the village and involve formal organizations require a second level of analysis of social capital. To satisfy both the individual and relational properties of social capital, multiple measures will be compared (reported individual attributes, coordination of actors within mobilization networks).

Finally, *political capital* is perhaps the least tangible and most difficult to define, but takes us closest to the heart of the dilemma of decentralization – the capture of local institutions. By political capital, I refer to both the psychological competence regarding influence in and

participatory voice in decision-making processes related to the distribution of public goods.⁴⁵ These public goods might include the space to make local budget rules or national laws, the distribution of tax costs and benefits, control over the delivery of a social welfare program, or the monopoly over the use of violence. For some, such as Booth and Richard (1995, 1998) political capital consists of a combination of attitudinal support for a democratic system of governance (civic norms for democratic liberties) and conventional political participation. Political capital is the core dimension of empowerment for Bobo and Williams (1990: 378) defined as the extent to which a group has achieved significant representation and influence in political decision making. Following Bourdieu, political capital is the capacity to speak authoritatively for or count on the support of a large category of people who can be mobilized collectively for exercising pressure over the distribution of benefits of public goods.⁴⁶ Thus, political capital involves both capacities for conventional and contentious participation, as well as attitudes toward and formal mechanisms of representation. As with social capital, multiple indicators of political capital will be explored at different levels of analysis.

Political capital will be measured in two ways. First, the ability to contact authorities (NGO, municipal council or mayor or some agency of the national government) to make a request or demand and as such represents political access. Typical access involve requests that may range from individual transactions (document certification, personal reference or credit) to public requests (specific project proposal or to attend to some community problem). Government access may also revolve around indemnification under programs of the Peace Accords in areas of FMLN influence. Second, political capital will be measured by the perceived availability of principled solidarity as a resource for solving political challenges that one's community might face. What I will refer to as collective efficacy addresses the extent to which a person believes that they could count on the support of their neighbors and whether they themselves would opt for joining a local protest to resolve political problems in the community. Such local problems might involve the excessive cost of electricity or the contamination of the

⁴⁵ Friedman's (1992) category of psychological capital overlaps with my definition of political capital in terms of its central focus on psychological competence.

⁴⁶ This definition is adapted from Peillon (1998: 217, 2001).

community by a nearby business. In addition, collective efficacy will be measured by reported support for norms of equality associated with local economic development.

In the domain of rural development in poor countries, economic capital is the principal reference for comparing the value of other forms of capital. Conversion rates vary, however, between forms of capital and between different contexts of exchange. Bourdieu (1986: 252) argues that economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money (therefore most easily transmissible, and least easy to conceal) and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights. Political capital may be the most difficult to convert into money because the value of its stock is the most unstable.

Another key difference between economic and other forms of capital has to do with variable ceilings. While asset and income accumulation theoretically have no upper limit, other forms of capital have a ceiling. There are diminishing returns to some forms of human capital investment, or in other words a point beyond which a person cannot be more nourished or healthy, or to a lesser extent, more skilled (Sen 1992: 5). There is also a practical limit to the number of friends one might have, to the extent of participation in community affairs that might be desired, or increase to the stock of self-respect. Unlike economic capital accumulation, these other forms of capital accumulation have a ceiling.

However, in cases such as El Salvador, we are faced with fewer ceilings and more floors. What we care about with respect to the deprivation associated with the Salvadoran case is basic minimal capability, or the pre-requisite for adequate functioning (Sen 1992, chapter 1). Poverty gap estimates and the like demonstrate that equality of basic capability is achievable even though income (or anything else) is unevenly distributed. Therefore, we are not concerned with the distribution of maximum capability, nor ignoring the fact of biological and normative diversity by aiming for perfect equality. Its efficient conversion rate and unlimited ceiling underscore the importance of economic capital over other forms. However, economic capital may be of limited importance if valued ways of being and doing involve certain intangible goals.

Another important issue is reversibility. Capital stocks, as conceived here, may diminish through depreciation, consumption, or exchange. Therefore, disempowerment involves the very real possibility of declining power resources. During periods of rapid change, the greatest challenge to peasant farmers is to simply defend the assets they currently have. However, the prior discussion of convertibility suggests that not all types of capital are equally reversible.

Political sympathies can switch, land can be sold and savings can be consumed in times of distress, trust can be violated and lost, patrons or friends can be alienated. Each represents potentially reversible processes leading to capital deficit. On the other hand, education, knowledge, and skills are all more difficult to erode. Similarly, a parent's educational attainment cannot be transferred directly through inheritance, although some genetic and contextual advantages might make it seem so.⁴⁷

Beyond these issues, a focus only on the composition of the capital stocks will not tell us what a particular person can do with them, in other words what they have achieved or have the ability to achieve with those resources. Empowerment requires agency to explain the defense, reproduction or accumulation of capital, as well as the conversion of these power resources into achievement.

b. Agency

Agency is the ability to define one's goals and act on them. As illustrated above in Figure 1.1 agency involves strategies that encompass a range of individual and collective actions intended to contribute to the defense, reproduction and accumulation of capital, as well as the conversion of this capital into valued ways of being and doing. I refer to the typology of strategies for solving the collective action dilemma outlined in Table 1.1 (see below) and elaborate specific ways that collective problems might be solved in the context of post-war decentralized rural development in El Salvador.

Agency, according to Chambers, means not only that people produce more, and more efficiently, but it also means they have the capacity to change the rules that govern or legitimize future use.⁴⁸ Chambers says a great deal about various rural development activities as potentially empowering. However, his argument seems to take as an article of faith that socially optimal arrangements will result even in a context of high inequality and predatory self-interest. For the powerless, effective use of resources may be instrumentally oriented toward surviving

⁴⁷ This is of course different than one's educational credentials, which are to a much greater extent, for sale.

⁴⁸ I refer to arguments outlined by Chambers in a series of Institute of Development Studies (IDS) discussion papers, and books (1983, 1987, 1997), but mainly his argument in (1987) "Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, Environment and Development: Putting Poor Rural People First".

(welfare service provision), or structurally oriented toward effecting sustainable improvements in the quality of life (emancipatory). While I agree with the spirit of Chamber's proposal, my conception of agency places greater emphasis on collective action strategies that anticipate a much higher probability of resistance from local elites toward the emancipatory orientation, as well as foot-dragging by benevolent development practitioners.

Thus, agency by the powerless must provide for collective action to some extent, which must endure in the face of resistance by the powerful and have the capacity to contest this resistance. The typology shown earlier in Figure 1 provides a blueprint for the four possible strategic directions that agency might take. For rationalists, interests are given and people are assumed to be able to recognize and rank their preferences, and to the best of their knowledge, subjectively estimate the costs and benefits of available courses of action (or inaction), choosing the one that maximizes their self-defined well-being. The logic of collective action," states Olson, "focuses on what does or does not take place after people have defined their interests in a particular way" (1990: 24). Rationalists would therefore emphasize Market and Contract CA strategies in the Figure 1.1 typology that rely on stable individual preferences, require a minimum of planning and emphasize raising the costs or benefits of a particular choice of action.

Culturalists disagree cautioning that preferences and utility functions are tractable, affective, and are concerned with long-term goals (reputation) rather than short-term tactics. Agency is politically constructed through local interaction with other agents and structures.⁴⁹ Therefore, empowerment can be conducted through Community CA strategies from below or Hierarchy CA strategies from above. Through Community strategies from the bottom up, people become aware of their preferences through self-actualizing political experiences, which are reinforced by mechanisms of socialization to similar local norms and ties.⁵⁰ Structuralists, on the other hand, argue that whether individual or collective actions are guided by the pursuit of evolving or fixed interests is dependent upon the institutional or organizational configuration of the field of action. Hierarchy suggests a Leviathan type strategy by large organizations or

⁴⁹ Lichbach (1995: 330) notes that culturalists are divided as to whether culture works as a mechanism of efficiency or equity.

⁵⁰ Although some rationalists contend that well-being may be defined in non-materialist, other-regarding terms, such as leisure, altruism, etc., most rationalists follow Adam Smith in assuming wealth or power maximization as the predominant interest. In contrast, following Marx, Freire's concept of conscientization, assumes that interests change as a consequence of growing awareness of one's class identity.

hegemonic actors that have the capacity to internalize the costs of CA. Hierarchy CA strategies work through a combination of coercion and clientelism, setting the boundaries and cues for action that supersede the interests that might otherwise be motivated by rational calculation or parochial communal socialization.

How do Market, Contract, Community and Hierarchy collective action strategies help us understand the link between decentralization and empowerment? First, agency must be considered within the policy framework of decentralized rural development. Second, we can begin with Lichbach's assumption that the three alternatives to Market strategies are contexts for the latter baseline rational, self-interested, individualist strategy.

Take as an example the question of participation in a municipal budget planning process that is common to local governance and a fundamental mechanism of transparency and accountability in local development finance in El Salvador – the *cabildo abierto*. Participation in these periodic convocations of the public to discuss, ratify and control municipal income and spending priorities depends to some extent on the active participation of the public. Participation in the *cabildo* is needed to legitimize of local rule.⁵¹ However, the function of the *cabildo* varies considerably with respect to historically rooted expectations and performance standards for local governance. In settings of high inequality, the likelihood of political capture is both a reality and a disincentive for the powerless to participate. Traditionally privileged interests view the *cabildo* both as a means to steer scarce public development resources in their favor as well as to stave off any redistributive effort that might challenge the actual basis of their power. Elites therefore have an incentive to participate, if only indirectly through surrogate agents. The challenge of collective action in this decentralized decision making process is to promote the optimal level of participation to balance costs with the principal benefit of avoiding political capture by local elites.

There are differing views on the optimal level of participation, which I will argue is contingent on accumulated political experiences and expectations in respective insurgent and counter-insurgent towns. However, the collective action strategy framework gives us some clues as to how this agency challenge might be resolved.

⁵¹ Both because the holding of *cabildos* is a requirement to receive state transfers and because local governments believe, albeit to varying degrees, that public input is necessary to improve local governance, this legitimacy is conferred to local government via *cabildos*.

A Market strategy would focus on the costs and benefits (perceived and real) of individual participation. For example, travel compensation or subsidized transportation, gifts, or a meal, entertainment might all be offered to lower the costs or increase the benefits of participating in the cabildo. A Contract strategy would focus on negotiations designed to alter the constraint or benefit structure for participation. The key focus of such negotiations might involve representation on the municipal council or resource allocation rule making committee, influence over the distribution of municipal resources, how to increase turnout, or the creation of formal organizations within the ambit of municipal decision making that provide greater voice to non-exclusive constituencies. Still, as with the Market strategy, the Contract strategy toward participation emphasizes influence over the rationality of individual participation.

A Hierarchy strategy would focus on selective benefits and sanctions as incentives for participation of a targeted population. The selective benefit/sanction strategy might be oriented in two ways. A clientelist orientation often used by political bosses might provide some bonus (per diem) or threat (verifiable by attendance lists) to people dependent upon the patron to ensure participation that was ultimately reinforcing of the power relations between the patron and client. Alternatively, the patron might provide the same incentives to coerce participation of groups that are not necessarily dependent and whose participation coincides with a view of the common good. For example, a benevolent despot might enable the voice of excluded groups through lowered costs of participation in a way that might be oriented toward strengthening community norms and dispositions at the eventual expense of the despot's power.

Finally, a Community strategy might draw from and strengthen existing norms of reciprocity and past experiences of collective action that encourage participation in the cabildo to ensure representation. A Community strategy does not require incentives from outside or a priori bargaining, but relies instead on informal organizing that is flexible yet appropriate to each new instance of representation. While costs and benefits matter to the effectiveness of Community collective action strategies, they are not decisive.

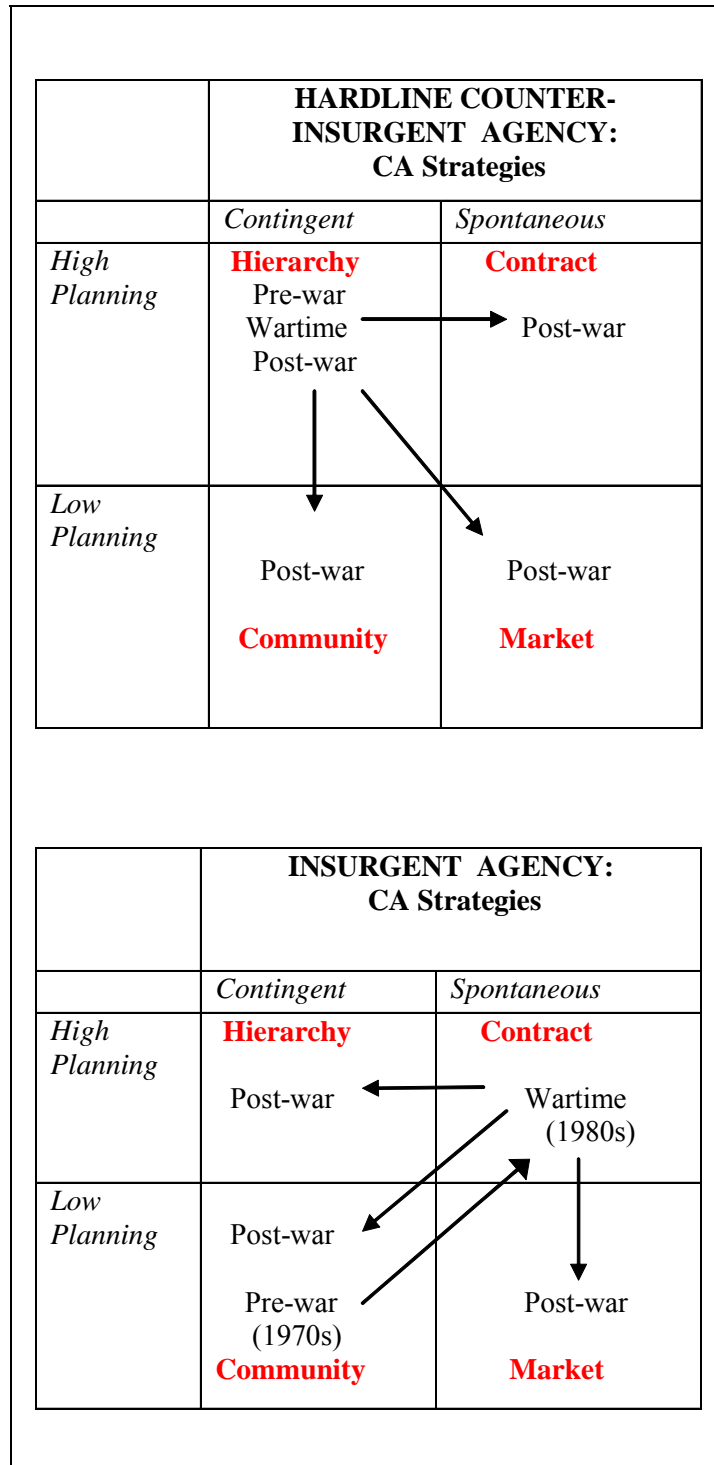


Figure 1.3 Counter-Insurgent & Insurgent Collective Action Strategies, 1960-1998

The cabildo example is but one of many instances of how the challenge of collective action impinges on the effectiveness of decentralized development in settings of high inequality. Other examples of local decision making requiring some level of cooperation that are prone to political capture might face the reverse threat of exit by vested local elites. The management of scarce common pool resources such as water, forests, grazing pasture, or an irrigation district are not unlike public budgets, in that large users must agree to comply with a mutually agreed set of rules for the resource to be sustainable. While powerful elites have often absorbed the costs of cooperation to prevent free riding by the poor, they also just as frequently enjoy exit options that make these rules non-binding in the absence of ineffective monitoring and enforcement capacity by non-elites. As such, the challenge of collective action to ensure the sustainable and fair use of common pool resources may involve the restriction of elite exit options. How the respective actors choose to act to resolve this collective action problem can also be understood within the proposed agency framework.

Formal organization as a Contract collective action strategy explicitly designed to improve resource mobilization and distribution helps explain the rise of Salvadoran NGOs and the decline of gremios in an environment of state repression. Planning and organization in the rise of increasingly bureaucratic NGOs tends to come at the expense of ideology, radical norms, or the flexibility of more informal gremios and grassroots CA strategies. Contract strategies may undermine Community strategies. Similarly, coercion or selective benefits/sanctions can only temporarily solve CA problems, before voluntarism is overwhelmed by opportunism. Hierarchy can also destroy Community strategies.⁵²

Ultimately, multiple CA strategies are employed simultaneously, although it is possible to identify dominant strategies at different moments (Figure 1.3). For both insurgent and counter-insurgent movements during and after the war in El Salvador, the government and FMLN both relied to differing degrees on a Hierarchy CA strategy to mobilize support and diminish resistance during the civil war. However, I will show that the starting point for hard-line counter-insurgents was a very similar repertoire of Hierarchy CA strategies. For insurgents, their starting point before the war came from a Community strategy preference, then gravitated

⁵² See Taylor (1982). Selective incentives foreclose community strategies by undermining altruism, reciprocity and voluntarism. Exclusive reliance on selective incentives or disincentives can have a similarly corrosive effect on the ability to legitimate bargaining positions contemplated in a Contract strategy.

to a balance between Contract and Hierarchy strategies during the war (culminating in the agreement between the five rebel factions that created the FMLN). However, reliance on sustained Hierarchy strategies by the FMLN during the war was neither as exclusive nor as intense as the government and military. Here I depart from other analyses, both from critics and neutral observers of the FMLN that painted the war mobilization strategy somewhat narrowly as coercion or co-optation. Rather, the FMLN experimented with a wide variation of mobilization tools that ranged from instilling solidaristic values to imposing strict entry and exit restrictions on all forms of collaboration.

In the post-war period, hard-line counter-insurgents have been forced to diversify their CA strategies as a consequence of the dismantling of much of the repressive state apparatus and greater political competition. The FMLN has also employed a shifting balance of all four CA strategies, contrary to the more dire predictions about the insurgent pathological tendencies toward greed, opportunism, corruption and coercion.⁵³ If we were to believe the arguments of the Salvadoran elite and its U.S. benefactors, before, during and after the civil war, FMLN rule would be intolerant, authoritarian, secretive, and unrestrained in the violation of property rights and human rights. The predominant strategies of FMLN governance at the local level have been, in fact, more pragmatic - to perfect local governance through Contract and Community CA strategies, despite the noted tension and interconnectedness between them.

Lichbach (1998: 271) argues that Market and Hierarchy strategies are mostly likely to generate or perpetuate inequality. It follows that if the FMLN has effectively relied less on these strategies, that inequality has also been diminished in zones of insurgent influence, both in absolute terms and as an obstacle to collective action. Conversely, we should suspect from this argument that inequality should not only persist in areas of counter-insurgent influence by the military or government during the war, that the preferred CA strategies adapted to war mobilization should have reinforced inequality. Both tendencies can be demonstrated and have left their mark on post-war development processes.

Agency will be measured by comparing collective action strategies in the case study municipalities, with attention to the formation of mobilization networks, the prevalence and

⁵³ Lichbach (1998, Chapter 8) provides an extensive list of scenarios in which rebel solutions to the CA problem create unintended and perverse consequences that undermine future collective action.

impact of NGOs, patrons, or informal grassroots organizations, and the significance, scope and style of political advocacy.

c. Achievements (Mediating Attitudes & Sustainable Livelihoods)

To assess empowerment, we must evaluate what has been achieved. This task confronts two problems: a level of analysis problem and a temporal sequence (simultaneity) problem. First, empowerment is conceived as a three level process (individuals aggregated at the level of the community, local actors linked or unlinked at the meso-organizational level, and rural development properties at the macro-societal level). Empowerment hinges on solving collective action problems to contest inequality at each level. While the individual-community level represents the most basic locus of change, collective action at each level is necessary to achieve sustainable rural development. Decentralization can then be conceived of as a series of nested collective action problems (within the community; within the mobilization network; and within society).⁵⁴

The temporal sequence problem involves identifying a starting point in the recursive process that leads from resources to achievements. Are people empowered as the outcome of a process, or did already empowered people determine the outcome of a process? In other words, capital stocks are simultaneously inputs and outputs of the empowerment process. Empowerment begins with an initial stock of capital, but generally sustains or increases capital stocks as a consequence as well as producing other achievements.⁵⁵ However, any cross-section analysis of an empowerment process is unable to accurately distinguish between beginning capital resources or achievement capital resources. The short time period of observation for most of the rural development interventions in this study prohibits any clear solution to this methodological problem, except to attempt careful inferences when available data on resource and achievement indicators permit.

⁵⁴ The proposed framework to evaluate empowerment at the World Bank takes a similar approach. See Alsop and Heinsohn (2005).

⁵⁵ There are conditions of trade-off, where an increase in one form of capital may necessarily diminish the stock of another form. An increase in economic capital from having a successful career may come at the expense of time available to participate in the life of one's community or family.

In light of the formidable data requirements suggested by this framework, some simplification is required. Within the core relationships of the proposed empowerment model, I will limit my focus to the following individual level resource and achievement indicators listed Figure 1.4 (and detailed in Tables A.1-A.4 in the Appendix). For economic capital, several indicators will be measured including family income, land ownership, access and distribution, remittance benefits, and household and agricultural asset index. The primary indicators for human capital will be years of schooling attained and civic knowledge (capacity to correctly identify key local political figures). Social capital indicators will include social ties, reported communal associational density, the observed presence of organizational networks, and a surrogate for exit options (distance to local market or paved road). Political capital indicators will be measured by access to the local government, access to national government, access to local NGO, as well as several indicators of collective efficacy (aspects of perceived capacity to count on neighbors in collective action solutions to political problems).

Achievement indicators at both the individual level or aggregated at the level of the community are mediated by certain attitudinal underpinnings. These attitudes include personal and political efficacy, inter-personal trust, optimism toward the future, and positive aspirations for personal or communal development.

Achievements include fulfillment of basic needs, social or political action, resource mobilization and local problem solving-advocacy skills. Key indicators for these achievement areas (detailed in Appendix Table A-4) will be measured predominantly and the individual level aggregated by community or type of political experience. Access to minimum health, clean water, shelter and electricity are all considered basic for survival. I add to these social and political actions, which combine actual voice in social or political decisions, the evidence of participation in various aspects of community life and local politics, and the level of actual voting or protest participation within the municipality (with special attention to women's participation). Local problem solving and advocacy skills will compare the attitudes of capacity with reported preferences and actual attempts to solve identified local problems, with attention to level of coordination, contentious versus accommodative orientations, and the encompassing or hierarchy features of an advocacy coalition (horizontal and vertical ties). Finally, resource mobilization at the household and municipal level will be examined. At the individual level indicators will include agricultural income improvements, productivity, diversification, land

security, dependence on remittances and access to credit. The complexity of empowerment as I have suggested so far makes clear that any attempt to measure this concept will fall far short of a precise instrument, but hopefully generate insights that allow the framework to be more than a heuristic tool. I am interested in comparing the differences in empowerment between individuals who belong to communities, are intervened upon or represented by organizations and are constrained or provided opportunities by the rules and norms of a society. There are undoubtedly other empowerment indicators that are unrepresented in this configuration. Security is an obvious element of empowerment in El Salvador, inferring a basic protection against violent abuse, violation of property rights. Resilience is another, pointing to the elements of a limited insurance policy for coping with periodic crises – credit, adequate health, and the ability to produce in a way that conserves the long term viability of one's natural assets. Both of these elements of an empowerment model are beyond the quantitative limits of this study, but will be addressed in other ways.

At the meso-organizational level, empowerment is concerned mostly with the capacity for horizontal and vertical collective action (coordination as opposed to competition and isolation) of local development actors. The principal domain for assessing organizational coordination will be local governance and resource mobilization in particular. Change in the availability, diversity and control over local development resources will be assessed at the municipal level as several measures of resource mobilization. Other meso-level measures include institutional performance, coordination, accountability, transparency and representation. These will be measured through a combination of survey and qualitative evidence. Together they constitute a framework for measuring meso or institutional level achievements.

Additional organization level achievements include the quality of services provided, the perceived representativity of the relations with the target population, the transparency with which the work is conducted, and the range of mechanisms through which the organization can be held accountable. At the societal level, measurement will be the most speculative in terms of its direct link to micro and meso-level processes, and will coincide to a large degree with discussion of the shifts in the political opportunity structure. Equity will be measured by the distribution of critical resources, including income, land, education, and political rights. Accountability will focus on the quality, responsiveness and effectiveness of key institutions. Political stability will focus on protection of society from arbitrary action by state agents or international forces.

Resources	Agency	Mediating Attitudes	Achievements
Economic capital Income Land Land inequality Remittances Dependency ratio Farm Assets HH Assets Human capital Education Civic Knowledge Social capital Social Ties Associational density Exit Options Networks -Horiz. Bonding ties -Horiz. Bridging ties -Vertical ties Political capital Access to local govt. Access to natl. govt. Access to NGOs Collective Efficacy	Market (unplanned, spontaneous, individual) privatization, deregulation, liberalization of state authority change costs/benefits invest in public relations entry/exit - migration Contract – (planned, spontaneous, individual) delegation of authority improve bargaining capacity through formal organizations (NGOs) & networks negotiate land taxes channel remittances Hierarchy- (planned, contingent, institutional) power/resource centralization or deconcentration party hegemony/discipline patron-client selective incentives or disincentives Community-(unplanned, contingent, social) devolution of authority & resources invest in process (trust, reciprocity) tap solidarity strengthen informal organizations	subjective confidence trust life satisfaction optimism toward future development aspirations political efficacy system support preferences for change religious non-fatalism critical consciousness	Meeting Basic Needs access to water access to adequate housing access to electricity access to health care project beneficiary Social & Political Action voice in communal decisions satisfaction with local decision making local demand effectiveness taking part in the life of the community taking part in local politics taking part in local projects taking part in women's organization women's influence cabildo participation voting/abstention protesting Local Problem Solving & Advocacy Problem solving skills Collective advocacy Resource Mobilization Improve Ag Incomes Improved Ag production Ag diversification Ag intensification Land use Land security Access to credit

Figure 1.4 Individual – Community Level Empowerment Indicators

D. SUMMARY AND RESTATEMENT OF WORKING HYPOTHESES

Decentralization of government has been prescribed widely in Latin America over the past two decades, justified on the premise that it necessarily encourages more accountable governance by empowering local actors. However, under conditions of high inequality and weak democracy, decentralization is frequently captured instead by powerful elites as a top-down strategy for preserving their interests and power. Given this ambiguous mandate, a performance standard for empowered local actors is required. Several broad hypotheses guide the subsequent analysis of why civil society organizations, local governments and social safety nets have appeared as important development actors in the postwar period, what form local development action has taken, and the evaluation criteria for performance of local actors in El Salvador.

Hypothesis 1) Decentralization, defined as the devolution of resources and authority to local actors and increased participation in local politics, tends to reinforce already existing distributions of power when democratic institutions are weak and local inequality is high.

Hypothesis 2) Under such conditions, decentralization works (i.e. empowerment is achieved) when local actors acquire capital resources and use them effectively to overcome collective action problems and contest prevailing inequality.⁵⁶

Hypothesis 2a) Counter-insurgent empowerment by invitation approaches to decentralization will tend toward Market and Hierarchy CA strategies that stabilize local inequality.

Hypothesis 2b) Insurgent empowerment through conflict approaches to decentralization will tend toward Community and Contract CA strategies that challenge local inequality.

⁵⁶ This hypothesis assumes that some local actors are able to coordinate their interests, which are to defend an unfair or predatory advantage over the rest.

Hypothesis 3) Effective use of resources (agency) to contest prevailing inequality will require the capacity for both contentious and conventional collective action.

Hypothesis 4) Decentralization may disempower local actors to the extent that on their own (i.e., in the absence of state safeguards) they are unable to overcome collective action problems to seriously contest prevailing inequality through conventional or contentious means.

II. CHAPTER TWO: POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY AND TWO COMPETING PATHS TO EMPOWERMENT IN EL SALVADOR

A. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter one, I proposed a core set of relationships between resources, agency and achievements to explain empowerment as the central measure of effective decentralization. I also suggested two competing interpretations that frame this core set of relationships, empowerment by invitation and empowerment through conflict. According to these two views, empowerment can be a top-down or bottom up process, pushed down by elites or pulled down by popular mobilization, through consensus or conflict.

The Resources-Agency-Achievements framework for evaluating empowerment involves individual choices. Why agency takes individual or collective, accommodative or contentious forms requires analysis of the larger structure of political opportunity, including competing efforts to shape the meaning of empowerment. In other words, to explain how empowerment comes to be seen as a win-win or win-lose process requires an analysis of the social forces competing to have one or the other interpretation prevail.

In this chapter, I introduce the structure of political opportunity, including mobilization networks, to show how decentralized local development during the post-war transition in El Salvador has generated both empowerment models. The *structure of political opportunity* sets conditions on the range of agency choices that may derive from any resource set, as well as the institutional form and focus of strategies to expand or restrict choice and in turn, the resulting achievements of rural development.

The Salvadoran post-war transition clearly illustrates the impact of competing conceptions of empowerment on the outcomes of local governance and rural development interventions between 1992 and 1998. During a twelve-year civil war, competing conceptions of empowerment facilitated insurgent and counter-insurgent collective action through reliance on a combination of selective benefits, local norms, coercion and voluntarism in support of either the government of El Salvador (GOES) or the insurgent Farabundo Martí Nacional Liberation Party (FMLN).

The collective action repertoire associated with areas historically under the long dominant influence of right-wing political parties, such as the National Republican Alliance-ARENA, *Partido Conciliación Nacional* – PCN, and the center-right Christian Democrats, have emphasized stabilizing strategies of accommodation to prevailing local inequality of opportunity. I refer to this approach as the consensus path to empowerment, or empowerment by invitation.⁵⁷ Supporters of the FMLN, on the other hand, have pursued decentralization strategies that have challenged post-war inequality. I associate this combination of conventional and contentious tactics with a dissensus path to empowerment, or empowerment through conflict. Empowerment by invitation is a top-down, elite brokered process of political negotiation, premised upon a positive sum distribution of the benefits and a prior acceptance of the rules. Empowerment through conflict, on the other hand, implies a bottom-up, zero-sum contestation over political benefits, as well as very rules and privileges that assure elites a cut of any subsequent benefit distribution.

Understanding how these strategies have been formulated and mediate decentralized institutional performance in rural development is rooted in analysis of the local political context. In the case of El Salvador, a rural insurgency pried open the political opportunity for decentralized rural development by reconfiguring the correlation of political forces at the national and local level. Given this opening, the respective legacies of insurgent FMLN and counter-insurgent GOES rule have directly shaped the conflict or consensus approach to

⁵⁷ The National Conciliation Party (PCN) ruled between 1960-1979 as the formal expression of the military. At the expense of oversimplification, the roots and interests of the PCN have been and continue to be almost indistinguishable from those of the presently governing ARENA party (1989-2004). The Christian Democrats began as a progressive political force during the mid 1960s, but upon assuming power in 1980 as part of the civilian-military junta, and after formally winning the executive office in 1984, the Christian Democrats rapidly lost both credibility and power.

empowering rural producers and citizens in respective localities of insurgent or counter-insurgent rule. The post-war empowerment strategies and performance of local development institutions can be traced back to their respective wartime political experiences.

In the first section of this chapter, I outline the more and less durable elements of political opportunity and show how they might be incorporated into the general model of empowerment. In the second section, I point to the elements of political opportunity in the institutional configurations of both insurgent and counter-insurgent experiences that have shaped the development choices in post-war El Salvador. In the third section, I combine the elements of political opportunity with the core relationships of empowerment to complete the comparative institutional framework for analysis of the Salvadoran case in the chapters that follow. In the final section, I detail my methodology for assessing the factors that make decentralization work in El Salvador, which combines survey analysis, key informant interviews and participant observation.

B. THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR DECENTRALIZATION IN POST-WAR EL SALVADOR

Collective action represents the central challenge to making decentralization work in settings of high inequality and weak democracy. Institutional strategies for solving collective action problems at the local level have gravitated toward strengthening municipal government, mechanisms for NGO coordination, and extending social safety net programs of the central government. However, the collective action strategies associated with these three local institutions have served as powerful forces for equity and democratization in some contexts but have strengthened the hand of predatory local and national elites in others. Explaining how both empowering and disempowering types of decentralization outcomes are possible and the conditions under which the former will be more likely, we must consider how competing notions of empowerment narrow or expand the range of available strategic choices. This competition over the meaning of empowerment turns our attention to the elements of the political opportunity structure: a) configurations of elites or institutional rules, b) the network mobilization capacity of

political entrepreneurs. Taken together, these elements of political opportunity constitute an important qualification of the empowerment model presented in Chapter one, and help us understand how competing notions of empowerment set the agenda for available resources, strategies and achievements in rural development.

Tarrow defines *political opportunity* in structural terms, as “consistent - but not necessarily formal or permanent - dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure” (1994: 85). Similarly, Gamson (1996) defines political opportunities as dynamic and composed of any number of institutional or cultural elements that range from more to less enduring. Following Tarrow and Gamson, I distinguish between the more and less durable elements of political opportunity.

Figure 2.1 lists the most enduring elements of political opportunity (left column).⁵⁸ The first is the *availability or access to elite allies*, which are a function of the level of decentralization of the state and the party system. Dissident elites signal the vulnerability of the state or dominant group to collective action and increase the probability that such action will succeed. The more centralized a state or party system, the fewer points of access. However, the more centralized a state or party system, the more clear and unitary the target for collective action it presents. Decentralized states and party systems are more porous, but are more effective in preventing particularistic demands from flowing into encompassing movements. For example, Salvadoran right, embodied by ARENA, is a highly centralized party, capable of exercising discipline and providing little autonomy to lower level politicians. Arena has demonstrated an impressive capacity for preserving unity behind a small commission of appointed party leaders (COENA), despite periodic internal crises triggered by the electoral challenges by the FMLN.

Another enduring element of political opportunity is the *electoral stability of alliances between political elites*, (including international elites) and between elites and non-elites. The balance of power between the FMLN and the GOES was clearly influenced by political swings in the U.S. and Europe, particularly the collapse of the Soviet bloc. The secular decline of

⁵⁸ These five durable elements of political opportunity are evident priorities in the work of Gamson in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996), especially Figure 12.1 on pg. 281. See also Eisinger (1973), Tilly (1978), Kitschelt, (1986), Gamson (1990), Brockett (1991), and Kriesi (1996).

communist, socialist and social democratic political constituencies in the North, beginning in the late-1980s and the dramatic events of the early 1990s set certain limits to both insurgent and counter-insurgent strategies during the war. The assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, the political shift to the right under the Reagan administration in the U.S. to the center under Salvadoran Christian Democrat Napoleon Duarte in 1984, and the electoral defeat of the leftist Nicaraguan FSLN in 1990, all signaled key political realignments that reshaped the political opportunity for conflictive or consensual empowerment strategies within El Salvador.

A third enduring element of political opportunity is the *state's capacity/propensity for repression*. The Salvadoran military has been one of the most brutal in Latin American history. Episodes of state repression have conditioned empowerment strategies long after their time. However, the state's repressive capacity is neither monolithic nor constant over time. In El Salvador, explosions of state violence have coincided with the permissive leadership of "iron-fisted" presidential rule that has followed attempted liberal reforms.⁵⁹ Repressive capacity has also clearly turned on military aid appropriation votes in the U.S. Congress. Similarly, FMLN capacity to resist state violence has experienced several important shifts in leadership and resource endowments that substantially influenced their own political-military strategies as well as those of the government.

The final two elements of political opportunity are the attitudinal and behavioral referents of the *political culture*, and the related *openness or closure of media organizations*. Norms of legitimacy that the popular vote endowed to President Duarte in 1984 and the emergent respect for human rights represent two important dimensions of an enduring Salvadoran political culture that set limits to wartime strategies on the right and the left. These collective beliefs were therefore the target of insurgent and counter-insurgent propaganda. The institutional openness of the media merits act as the regulating valve of ideas and information that permit a democratic political culture to evolve. During the war Salvadoran media censored most non-governmental views, which the FMLN succeeded at times in circumventing only through sensational tactics. Post-war media has permitted greater access to non-elite views, but as a minority voice that is

⁵⁹ Salvadoran presidents or de facto leaders associated with the worst violation of human rights include Hernandez-Martinez, (1932-39) who followed the liberal reforms of Melendez (1928-32); Romero, (1977-79) after developmentalist reforms of Molina; D'Aubisson, 1979-82 as the driving political force behind the civil-military juntas, and perhaps Cristiani, (1989-1993) who followed Duarte. See *Comisión de la Verdad* (1993), Burns (1984), Vejar (1980), Williams and Walter (1998), Castellanos (2001)

disproportionately smaller than its representative audience. Nearly every major news source remains under the control of conservative private sector ownership with little accountability to the public. The media continue to distill or marginalize dissenting views.

Enduring Elements of Political Opportunity	Less Enduring Elements: Mobilization Networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elite access: level of centralization • Stability of elite alignments • State Repression Capacity/ Propensity • Political Culture • Institutional Openness of media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralization: Top-down, Bottom-up • Extension: Peripheral, Metropolitan, Transnational Links • Cross-Class: Between-Group Ties (Encompassing) or Within-Group Ties (Particularistic)

Figure 2.1 Elements of Political Opportunity

These enduring elements of political opportunity are stable enough to structure strategic choices over a defined period of time. However, enduring elements of political opportunity alone, fail to explain why repression may harden resistance in one place, but suppress it in another (Brockett 1991; Booth and Richard 1998) or why widened institutional access has elicited both citizen apathy (Michels 1962; Lipsky 1968; Piven and Cloward 1979) and “democratic overload” (Tocqueville 1955; Huntington 1968; Tarrow 1989; Diamond 1994); or why some dissident elites spark transformative collective action, while other calls to action fall on deaf ears (Tilly 1978; Tutino 1986; Wickham-Crowley 1993). This gap between structural opportunity and collective action is bridged by the less enduring mobilization networks.

Mobilization networks constitute the less stable elements of political opportunity. McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996: 3-4) define mobilization networks as “those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action.” They may include both meso-level and grassroots level actors, work and neighborhood associations, churches and schools, and informal friendship and family networks. In Figure 2.1 (right column), I highlight three important features of mobilization networks that help explain their effectiveness. First, networks may be top-down (elite dominated) and bottom-up (mass participation). Second, mobilization networks are increasingly transnational, extending from

local groups to international financial institutions (IFIs), bilateral aid agencies, donor NGOs, or diaspora populations. Third, a network can emphasize the mobilization of between-group ties (cross-class, encompassing) and/or within-group ties (particularistic) concerns.

During the war, the broader social movement associated with the FMLN represented the quintessential mobilization network. Fundraisers and political diplomats facilitated coordination with the FMLN central command, but the social movement actors on the whole, relied on a wide range of decentralized and bottom-up collective action. Mobilization was transnational in scope, but closely tuned to Congressional appropriation votes on U.S. military aid or crucial turning points at the local level in the conflict. The FMLN solidarity movement was cross-class, linking peasant villages, unions, parishes, student's groups and eventually transnational migrant communities that represented the revolutionary base of the insurgency with an extensive network of paired counterparts in the U.S., Canada and Europe. The constant flow of Salvadorans to the North and Northerners to the South exposed U.S. and European influence in the civil war and catalyzed participation in a wide variety of opposition actions within solid middle-class U.S. communities (Clements 1985, Golden and McConnell 1986). So effective was this movement that insurgent tactics became the blueprint for counter-insurgent strategists that lost little time in cultivating conservative support in the U.S., although from the top-down and with a less encompassing reach in terms of class. These competing mobilization networks were adapted as the principal vehicles of insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies during the post-war period.

C. INSURGENT & COUNTER-INSURGENT DECENTRALIZATION IN EL SALVADOR

In El Salvador, the emergence of decentralization policy and many local actors, particularly NGOs, social safety nets and municipal government, were in response to a specific historical political opportunity. In El Salvador, these origins can be found embedded in the logic of the country's civil war (1980-1992).⁶⁰ In this section, I provide a brief overview of three key

⁶⁰ Municipal government was established under Spanish colonial rule, but was a relatively powerless institution, eliminated in 1932 and gradually relegitimized prior to the 1983 constitution always in service of the local landowning elite.

turning points in the run-up to the twelve year civil war, suggesting how these shifts in political opportunity shaped the emergence of local institutions in the post-war period.

I then suggest how insurgent and counter-insurgent responses to changing political opportunity in the context of civil war influenced two competing approaches to empowerment. The FMLN employed an empowerment through conflict approach, emphasizing an inherent conflict of interest between elite and non-elite groups over a zero-sum distribution of power resources. The Government of El Salvador pursued an empowerment by invitation approach, based on an imposed consensus over the acceptable rules of political expression that preserved the inalienable property rights and political privileges of the elite. Both insurgent and counter-insurgent strategies to solving collective action problems during the civil war provide insights into the available strategies for resolving collective action problems in the post-war period.

Most agree that inequality, especially land inequality, was a root cause of the Salvadoran conflict (Wickham-Crowley 1992; Paige 1996; Midlarsky 1999). In 1971, 86% of El Salvador's 270,000 farmers had access to less than five hectares of land. At the same time, some of the wealthiest landowning families, such as the Dueñas, owned 22,764 hectares, the Guirolas (28,403 ha) the Sols (15,830 ha.) the Daglios (11,711 ha.), and some 47 other family holdings exceeded 1000 hectares (Colindres 1977). In 1971, the Gini coefficient for land distribution in El Salvador was 0.82, one of the highest indices of land inequality in the world (Muller and Seligson 1987). Those with access to the best and most extensive farmland also controlled commodity and credit markets, the sale of imported inputs, agro-processing and export contracts. Landed interests had long captured the vital organs of the state, and had converted the National Guard into a semi-private security mechanism for disciplining rural labor. The struggle for land against an increasingly repressive landed elite was a central dimension to the civil war.

1. The Center Collapses

The first turning point occurred in March 1980. Increasing pressure for reforms by students and radical Catholics, two fraudulent presidential elections, deteriorating conditions for urban and rural workers, escalating repression and the Sandinista overthrow of Somoza in neighboring Nicaragua, all pushed El Salvador to the brink of collapse by 1979. Rural insurgency from

below and political pressure from above by the United States induced the Salvadoran oligarchy to announce a major set of land reform programs and begin the forced expropriation of farms in March of 1980. Land reform was explicitly designed to reduce landlessness and steal support from the insurgency, but the imposition of the reform greatly diminished its initial impact. Hunger for land persisted and filled the ranks of the growing insurgency.

The flawed implementation of land reform and increasing state repression contributed to the failure of a series of civil-military provisional governments to contain the deepening conflict between hardliners on the right and the five leftist guerrilla factions that ultimately negotiated the creation of a single rebel umbrella organization. The indiscriminate killing of civilians by the Salvadoran armed forces and the assassination of Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero on March 24, 1980 increasingly tilted sympathies toward the FMLN and closed off any escape from civil war. The election of Ronald Reagan in November 1980 ushered in a conservative shift in U.S. politics that would coincide with the beginning and end of formal civil war in El Salvador.⁶¹ As a consequence of the events leading up to March 1980, the center in Salvadoran politics collapsed, the reforms were narrowed and became non-negotiable and reformist voices were silenced.

2. Military Stalemate and Strategic Decentralization

The second turning point came between January and March, 1984. Insurgent forces overcame countless defeats against the overwhelming military superiority of the Salvadoran armed forces to push the U.S. financed regime to the breaking point of folding in late 1983. Through steadily increasing contentious collective actions, the FMLN developed the political capacity and military strength to overrun the most well defended garrisons in the country, destroy major infrastructure linking the eastern and western halves of the country, and maintain control of large parts of the countryside. Within FMLN controlled zones of the country, rebel forces established popular local governments that decentralized many governance responsibilities. U.S. advisors warned

⁶¹ A formal state of war was declared in January 1981 and would last until Peace Accords were signed in January 1992.

the newly re-elected Reagan administration in early 1984 that the FMLN was on the verge of winning the war.

The U.S. responded with a change in military and political tactics that resulted in a decentralization of the war on both sides. A massive shipment of helicopter gun ships and fighter planes to the Salvadoran Armed Forces (FAES) in 1983 enabled a capacity for air strikes and rapid troop deployment that essentially neutralized the FMLN's ability to concentrate battalion size forces. The FMLN responded by deconcentrating its forces into smaller, self-reliant commando units that would increase the spatial dispersion of attacks but still allow concentration for large scale attacks. Force deconcentration also coincided with the massive displacement of the civilian base into refugee camps and the disruption of FMLN experiments in popular self-government within control zones.

The March 1984 presidential election of the center-right government of Napoleon Duarte also dealt a decisive blow to the FMLN strategy of promoting popular insurrection and fended off complete political control by the extreme right under Roberto D'Aubuisson. Despite irregularities that severely challenged the legitimacy of the result, Duarte's victory reflected the majority preference for peaceful social change that severely conditioned the political-military strategies of the FMLN.⁶² In response, the FMLN adjusted its strategy to demand the enforcement of civil liberties and political rights for the civilian population located in and returning to conflictive zones under insurgent control, restoring a limit to the repressive capacity of the FAES. The repopulation of FMLN control zones would ensure material support for the decentralized military units and lay the groundwork for formalizing entitlement to occupied land. A shakeup within the FAES high command also led to a shift from large military deployments to a decentralized civilian engagement plan modeled after U.S. civic action programs that were deployed in Vietnam to win the "hearts and minds" of the local population. Civic action also channeled resources directly through the military and through local mayors in an effort to recover some institutional legitimacy lost in the conflictive zones. This combination of elite realignments and augmented FMLN military capacity forced a greater reliance on local actors in both insurgent and counter-insurgent organizational strategies that enabled the constituency for post-war decentralization.

⁶² The murder-suicide of two top FMLN leaders April 1983 also contributed to a shift in strategic focus within central command away from a Vietnamese policy of prolonged popular war and toward negotiation.

3. The 1989 FMLN Offensive

The final turning point of the war came in November 1989. Regional peace talks had been deadlocked, stalled by the outgoing Reagan administration. No new commitments to the regionally crafted *Esquipulas* peace plan seemed forthcoming from the Bush government nor from the recently elected ARENA president, Alfredo Cristiani. With negotiations at a standstill and following several high profile civilian massacres, the FMLN shocked the Salvadoran government and U.S. military advisors once again with an unprecedented attack on the capital city, San Salvador. The attack failed to spark an insurrection despite severe government retaliation against the civilian population. However, like the Tet Offensive of 1968, the battle succeeded in proving to the U.S. that the war could not be won militarily. The murder of the Jesuit priests and other gross violations of human rights also engendered new opposition to the impunity of the Salvadoran regime. U.S. military aid was soon conditioned on a negotiated compromise and peace talks began in earnest.⁶³

What the FMLN gained in strategic parity, they lost in terms of the broader political realignment. The FMLN suffered an estimated 4,000 casualties in the ten day offensive, perhaps a quarter of its total combatant force. Any notion of mobilizing fresh recruits to extend the war was severely limited by the collapse of supportive Eastern European regimes, as well as the electoral loss by the Sandinistas in February, 1990. The events of 1989 signaled the best possible opportunity for a negotiated peace, which both sides seized on Jan. 22, 1992. In the winner-take-all political culture of El Salvador in which negotiation is rare, the political significance of the Peace Accords cannot be understated (Crosby, et al. 1996: 12).

These three turning points suggest how various elements of political opportunity combined to condition insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies during the war. Rapid concentration and polarization of forces on the left and right collapsed the political center in March 1980 and closed off strategies of populist state-led reforms and civil dissent. Escalation to an air war in 1984 forced both sides to decentralize their tactics, which re-opened the door to conventional politics. Mutual recognition of a military stalemate in 1989 during a

⁶³ The acquisition of surface to air missiles by the FMLN in 1989 and the initially devastating effect they had on the ability to conduct an air war also shifted the balance of power at this time toward the FMLN.

moment of tremendous political uncertainty permitted an end to militarism, shifted competitive tactics back to the terrain of post-war electoral politics in which local actors would play an unprecedented role.

Decentralization was a product of civil war, conditioned by the structure of political opportunity in El Salvador. Wartime decentralization involved two very different empowerment strategies to solve collective action problems. Strategies of empowerment through conflict in FMLN zones of influence and empowerment by invitation in GOES zones have shaped respective post-war development practices and outcomes. In the next section, I trace the rise of local government, NGOs and social safety nets as elements of insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies.

4. Insurgent Empowerment through Conflict

For many Salvadorans, empowerment has involved experiences of choosing to confront local inequality. In November 1974, unarmed peasants challenged the authority of two companies of National Guardsmen in the village of *La Cayetana*, a small village of tenant farm worker families beholden to the Angulo family. The Angulos owned the southwest slope of *Chinchontepec* volcano in San Vicente and had dominated regional politics. Peasant families had organized to demand access to subsistence plots that their families had farmed as sharecroppers for generations but which recently had been converted to commercial cotton. The audacity to openly confront the landowner, Coralía Angulo and the Guard ended badly, costing the lives of 14 men and the torture of 14 others in one of the conflict's first massacres. The unrest might have stopped here. Instead, *La Cayetana* galvanized a peasant worker movement, *La Unión de Trabajadores del Campo* (UTC) that would become one of the backbone popular organizations of the FMLN. Peasant combatants and supporters of the nascent insurgency participated in or witnessed for the first time a decisive challenge to the almost mystical authority of the Salvadoran security forces. The insurgency that coordinated rural mobilization networks such as the UTC constituted a shock to a systemic pattern of patron client relations that had preserved elite power in the Salvadoran countryside for nearly 150 years.

The FMLN successfully established zones of popular control covering close to a third of the national territory by 1983. Figure 2.2 shows FMLN control and expansion zones by the late

1980s. Rebel held territory was governed under a stylized federalism of militarily defensible popular local governments (*los poderes populares locales*). In these zones, unprecedented experiments in participatory, collective self-rule were attempted.⁶⁴ Where landowners fled, the FMLN sanctioned free access to land by thousands of formerly landless peasants and thereby challenged a notion of exclusionary property rights that had prevailed in El Salvador (Wood 2000). These experiences of insurgent rule not only challenged asset inequality, but eroded the symbolic legitimacy upon which the asymmetric power of the Salvadoran elite rested.

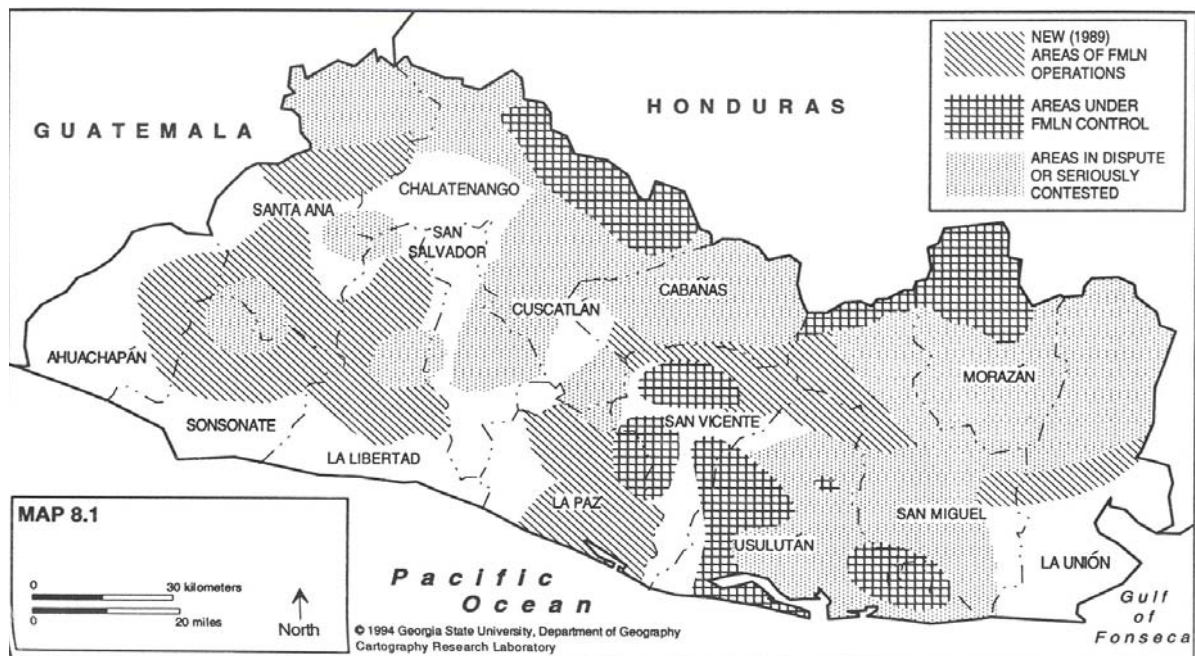


Figure 2.2 Map of FMLN Control and Conflictive Zones in El Salvador During the Civil War. Map reprinted with permission of Georgia State University, Dept. of Cartography, originally printed in Montgomery (1995)

Given the non-contiguous spatial distribution of FMLN controlled zones, decentralized collective action was necessary for survival. How was the FMLN able to resolve collective action problems to first concentrate, and then decentralize as many as 15,000 revolutionary

⁶⁴ I refer here to those zones where individuals chose to stay and thus become identified with the FMLN. The experience of popular local government was reconstructed through various interviews, and documented analyses including Medina Nuñez (1990: 85-152), Binford and Argueta, no date, mimeo; Binford (1997, 1999), Montgomery (1995), Pearce (1986), Montoya (1994), Thompson (1995).

forces as well as tens of thousands of logistic civilian supporters for over a decade? By responding to local grievances, appealing to norms of social justice, imposing entry and exit constraints and offering limited selective benefits, the FMLN established a variety of revolutionary institutions such as *los poderes populares locales*, transnational refugee and solidarity networks, and an array of specialized grassroots organizations. From these nascent movement networks, the first local NGOs were created.⁶⁵ All functioned under or at least in concert with the FMLN military command structure as catalysts for a socialist state at the national level and a transitional project of popular economic development at the local level.⁶⁶

The collective capacity of local actors, engaged in struggle with the Salvadoran state over greater political and economic self-determination, was under constant construction. This localized insurgent experience involved participation in literacy and primary health care brigades; cooperative production, processing and transport of food, clothing, medicines and other war related supplies; coalitions that planned and conducted human rights advocacy campaigns; surveillance and messenger squads that gathered and reported intelligence; unions and solidarity organizations that engaged in purposeful, non-violent confrontations with local and national authorities; diplomatic envoys that raised funds and cultivated political support in the exterior; and of course, the community militia and combatant units that engaged in direct military actions.

A sensationalist media, loyal to the military and oligarchy, closed off the public arena from informed debate the about most salient issues and actively collaborated with the government's efforts to delegitimize the FMLN. The FMLN resorted to clandestine radio, leafleting, graffiti, a vast network of political operators and other popular communication devices to disseminate an alternative message that justified the disruptive tactics as a last resort while conditions for a democratic peace were absent. The achievements and goals of the revolution were broadcast each evening by mobile radio transmitters and translated into popular culture

⁶⁵ Local NGOs existed for years in El Salvador, but most were urban based charity or professional associations.

⁶⁶ This is not to ignore that many other institutions chose to distance their work from the FMLN, or chose centrist or counter-insurgent alliances during the war. FMLN aligned NGOs sought structural change, by which I mean a fundamental challenge to private property rights through state-led expropriation by force, redistributive fiscal reforms, a large state role in planning and ownership of economic production combined with democratic civil liberties. Of course, few actors espoused well-articulated transformative or socialist models, but most shared common ideals. See Montoya (1994) for the best articulation of the popular local economy model, and González (1991), Foley and Edwards (1996) for the distribution of local actors allied and against the insurgent project.

through *cumbias* (traditional dances) performed by guerrilla musician groups *conjuntos* (Almeida and Urbizagástegui 1999; Henríquez Consalvi 1994).

Some have attributed active support for the FMLN more to coercion or fear than by revolutionary beliefs.⁶⁷ As failed peasant insurgencies have shown, coerced recruitment has been the recipe for failure. Unlike the government's mandatory conscription policy, recruitment by the FMLN was largely voluntary.⁶⁸ Some twenty to thirty thousand peasant supporters were killed (mostly civilians at the hands of government forces) before the FMLN consolidated protection of its zones of control by about 1984. Many migrated to the cities and abroad either voluntarily or in flight from state sponsored terror campaigns.⁶⁹ Those less politically militant peasants, *cooperativistas*, landowners, merchants or others who chose to stay in zones of insurgent control or expansion engaged in a complex negotiation with the FMLN over war taxes and other forms of passive collaboration. Active service in combat, which in the case of some lasted for nearly twenty years, was an austere and high-risk existence. For most, the typical economic payoff for revolutionary service among the survivors was a small plot of land and some marginal resources for a post-war subsistence occupation. In contrast to rational explanations of insurgent participation as an exchange for actual or expected share of the war booty, the eventual material rewards could scarcely compensate for the personal investment.⁷⁰

Facing a tremendous disadvantage in material resources and lacking physical refuge in a largely deforested countryside, the FMLN's ability to offer selective incentives was relatively negligible. Instead, the FMLN earned the committed support of a peasant minority and achieved the strategic passivity of many potential pro-government informants through a variety of non-material incentives. The insurgent appeal emphasized a demonstrably high probability that a

⁶⁷ For this view, see Danner (1994) and Stoll (1993) for a similar account of failed insurgency in Guatemala. For a more textured view of the Salvadoran case, see Binford (1996).

⁶⁸ Voluntarism must be understood within the context of repression that the Salvadoran state and death squads had enforced in the countryside for nearly a century during which choice was never free. The FMLN exploited the loss of single members of extended kin networks to recruit entire families in the early years of the war. Also, a short-lived attempt at forced recruitment in 1985 failed miserably. The government employed forced conscription tactics throughout the war.

⁶⁹ Conflictive zones experienced a tremendous depopulation. Nearly 1 in 3 Salvadorans were forcefully displaced or voluntarily migrated.

⁷⁰ See Grossman (1991, 1999) and Collier and Hoeffler (1999, 2000) for this "greed" explanation of recent civil conflicts.

corrupt, repressive regime could be beaten and that concessions from the rich could be won, all of which relied on disciplined class solidarity.⁷¹ Perhaps more importantly, solidarity was facilitated by relatively egalitarian distribution of available resources within their ranks and a reputation for honesty when bargaining with passive collaborators. The FMLN solved the collective action problem of insurgency less by imposing constraints on the free riders, but rather by establishing a credible reputation for ensuring that any post-war payoff would be equitably distributed.

Political-military support for the FMLN endured for over a decade in control zones because certain decision-making was carefully decentralized. The definition of local needs and the decisions over how to allocate resources in zones of FMLN control permitted an unprecedented exposure to principles of equity, accountability and participation. The five different political tendencies within the FMLN established a unified command, however political military strategies and relations to the civilian base differed between the two dominant organizations, the FPL and the ERP. A decidedly decentralized strategy was initiated in 1984 in response to greater GOES reliance on air transport and bombing. Different forms of base-party autonomy emerged in the various zones under FMLN control. However, all models shared certain fundamental principles that would ground an alternative development model upon winning the war. These principles included collective property rights and work, social and distributive equality, participatory planning and organization, transparency and accountability of leaders. These principles and experiences shaped post-war expectations and practices. This achievement was dramatic in relation to Salvadoran standards of clientelism and repression, although not meant to romanticize the limited freedoms and grave, but isolated abuses associated with FMLN governance during the war.⁷²

While mobilization was directed from the top-down, often steered by commanders who often came from the urban middle class, a reciprocal relation with peasants and workers broke with the clientelist and repressive cycle of past relations.⁷³ Violent disruption of unchecked elite

⁷¹ With respect to the non-combatant civilian population, passivity may or may not indicate neutrality. The nature of the conflict made such distinctions nearly impossible to determine.

⁷² Based on personal interviews. Also see Lungo (1996), Murray (1995), Montgomery (1995), Medina Nuñez (1990), Binford (1999).

⁷³ With several notorious exceptions described in Gibb (2000).

power in much of the Salvadoran countryside by the insurgent FMLN was an external shock to the structure of political opportunity that reduced the asymmetric power and unaccountability of the rich, shifted the balance of distributional conflict toward the interests of the poor and induced the grudging adoption of redistributive policies (Wood 2000; Binford 1997).

In the post-war period, FMLN local development experiences have continued to emphasize bottom-up, and at times, conflictive challenges to the political and economic elite. One concrete aspect of FMLN rule in local government or through the presence of NGOs has been the mobilization of the poor to demand greater redistribution of land and productive resources. Insurgent focus is on class conflict between rich and poor and on both absolute and relative gains for the poor as necessary conditions for empowerment.⁷⁴ Examples include campaigns to fulfill the commitments of the Peace Accords, write off an accumulated agrarian debt, challenges to the privatization of water and dozens of localized protests around increased state investment in rural infrastructure and provisions for environmental protection. Collective actions have forced expropriative redistribution of assets, which have lowered inequality and reduced the asymmetric bargaining power of local elites. It is not surprising that FMLN municipalities defy national indicators of income and land inequality that persist at levels that remain extremely high.

Scholars of revolution have attributed a variety of pathologies to insurgent rule and the FMLN strategies to the CA problem have no doubt generated certain disempowering effects (Skocpol 1979; Lichbach 1995:261-275; Grossman 1999; Collier and Hoeffler 1998). Some critics of the FMLN argue that the politics of disruption created as many new obstacles to collective action as they removed. Stimulating civil strife lowered economic growth, fostered intolerance, facilitated criminal activity, and weaken the legitimacy of political institutions – all of which tend to negatively impact the poor. The post-war effects of insurgent strategies are evident in the inequality of privilege between leadership and base, corruption, the routinization of protest, and participation in criminal violence.

Perhaps the more complex contribution of FMLN strategies of empowerment through conflict derive from the difficulties of reconciling a highly centralized organizational structure

⁷⁴ The relative-absolute gains distinction is particularly important for evaluating the impact of empowerment strategies in light of the accumulated evidence that development interventions frequently empower the already powerful rich and middle classes prior to or instead of empowering the poor.

and the incentive for decentralized decision-making autonomy. During the war, these “pathologies” of insurgent CA contributed to destructive competition between the five principal insurgent groups, an alleged culture of “*asistencialismo*”⁷⁵ that undermined local self-reliance, and the failure to monitor abuses of leaders at the local level. The possibility of winning the war temporarily unified disparate social forces during the war – a unity which has since unraveled. Internecine power struggles among party elites are largely to blame for the FMLN’s failure to win the Presidency since 1994. Despite unilateral efforts by the FMLN to institute decentralizing mechanisms of party-decision making power such as national and local convention nomination of candidates, a quota for women candidates, term limits, and primary elections, the wartime opposition coalition has fragmented into competing ideological or personalist factions. Some attribute this to the centralism of party leadership, others to the natural pluralist tendency with which any democratizing society must cope. Nevertheless, the costs of post-war party procedural decentralization seem to have outweighed the benefits so far for the FMLN at the national level, as greater voice for delegates and constituent groups has contributed to factional disputes that have splintered party interests. Appeals to class struggle that served to mobilize collective action during the war must now accommodate pluralist and subaltern (women, war wounded, environmentalist, children, migrant) demands to reform a coalition that is capable of winning national elections.

Despite the legacy of verticalist command, the categorical framing of the FMLN and their supporters as enemies of democracy stands in stark contrast to pragmatic, often innovative participatory experiments in local governance that have emerged in many FMLN communities. In the early post-war period, community participation in local decisions was limited to the revival of the *cabildo abierto*, or town meeting, as the primary inter-election mechanism for mayors to elicit citizen views on municipal resource allocation decisions. Initial evaluations of the municipal town meeting approach to administering local reconstruction funding showed that local governance was not seen as very participatory, and tended toward ritualistic validation of local authority.⁷⁶ Some mayors and NGOs, including many FMLN, have transformed the

⁷⁵ *Asistencialismo* is a term created by the donor community to describe the alleged habit of foreign aid dependence among communities whose livelihoods are destroyed by conflict or natural disasters.

⁷⁶ The *cabildo abierto* was established as a mechanism of Spanish colonial rule, dusted off by USAID and made the centerpiece of its local development program, Municipalities in Action, following the 1986 amendment of the

cabildo abierto into a participatory budgeting mechanism that has deepened citizen involvement in the allocation of local resources. Municipal planning processes have also emphasized building horizontal ties with other mayors and grassroots organizations and vertical linkages with the state and international donors in the coordination of local development efforts. FMLN mayors, backed by a plurality of deputies in the National Assembly, led the push to raise the level of municipal transfers to 6% of national budget in 1998.

However, municipal transfers are far from sufficient for rural development. Local rule in areas influenced by the FMLN typically has expanded the scope of local politics beyond issues of local service provision. Decentralized service provision is viewed as leverage for solving broader obstacles to rural economic development (investment, credit, infrastructure, non-farm employment). FMLN mayors have been particularly successful in raising local revenues, striking novel private-public partnerships, and leveraging international investment. Yet, these strengths have generally failed to make up for the tendency to divert state investment and services toward communities and producers supportive of the government and the diminished state support of agriculture. FMLN communities have attempted to fill this gap with NGO-led rural development projects, which are highly organized and notably more participatory, but clearly inadequate to make up for the state's neglect of the rural economy.⁷⁷ Even with substantial donor backing, as in major integrated rural development programs in several departments, these projects have produced only modest economic improvements when unsuccessful in negotiating state collaboration. An increase in environmental disasters has only exacerbated the failure to stabilize rural livelihoods.

5. Counter-insurgent Empowerment by Invitation

In parts of the countryside under government rule during and after the war, Salvadoran peasants experienced a very different strategy of empowerment. While life was also conflictive,

municipal statutes. See Seligson and Córdova (1995), Goodin, et al. (1996) and Chechi (1994) for survey evidence of the performance and evaluation of the *cabildo abierto* fora.

⁷⁷ The principal development NGOs emerged from the five political factions that came to constitute the FMLN: CORDES (FPL), (PRTC), FUNSALPRODESE (PC), REDES (RN) and sixth F-16, now FUNDESA. Another, FUNPROCOOP, was created by the Catholic Church in 1970.

empowerment involved a fundamental tradeoff: accommodation of local inequality in exchange for protection from the conflict. If a community actively resisted the FMLN and provided support to the Salvadoran military, victimization by state sponsored violence was considerably less. In exchange for loyalty, the Government of El Salvador promised protection from FMLN attacks, resources for reconstruction and development and recognition as patriotic defenders of the nation. In effect, this exchange constituted empowerment by invitation – a coerced contract between peasant clients and the patron state to withhold support for the insurgents. This counter-insurgent empowerment strategy shaped the post-war bargain around an imposed consensus for reconstruction. Participation would be confined to non-threatening activities that effectively disregarded local inequality and was rewarded with projects.

The legacy of counter-insurgent empowerment can also be traced to crucial events. In the communities of Jiboa Valley, located less than 180 degrees around the *Chinchontepec* volcano from *La Cayetana*, a similar stand off occurred in 1979 between peasants and local elites. A dispute over deteriorating wages and working conditions during the coffee harvest led to a strike organized by local peasant leaders to withhold labor from the largest fincas, several of which were owned by the family of Alfredo Cristiani. After patiently absorbing the economic losses of the strike, the National Guard selectively killed 20 peasants considered to be lead organizers. Like *La Cayetana*, the unrest could have stopped there, and it did. The massacre of coffee strikers effectively silenced any future dissent in the Jiboa Valley for next decade. Despite repeated attempts, no locally rooted support for the FMLN was organized on the northern slopes and valley of the volcano. Instead, the peasants of the region accepted the invitation of the Salvadoran armed forces to fight against the FMLN, defend the coffee harvests and enjoy the state's protection. Most peasants remained in fear of state repression and undoubtedly understood that their actions preserved the unequal privilege of a few coffee families that continue to dominate the Jiboa Valley today.

The government responded to the FMLN insurgency in places like the Jiboa Valley with a rapid build up of counter-insurgent troop strength. Peasants were conscripted to serve in a military that expanded to as many as 63,000 active troops. Others were organized into civil defense units. The most loyal to the government were active in clandestine intelligence gathering and death squads. While service was voluntary, coercion often played the decisive role. Many families with any resources relocated to the urban centers and evacuated their

children to the U.S. The poor migrated to shantytowns that rose up around the major cities. Others who remained in the conflictive zones suffered the economic sabotage of the insurgents. Collective action problems were solved by the government and military by absorbing the costs of sanctioning free riders. The threat of repression ensured that enough peasants contributed their service to the civil defense brigades.

The provisional government led by the Christian Democrats expected to gain the sympathies of some of the 80,000 families who received land through the agrarian reform. An alliance was established with the centrist *Unión Comunal de Salvadoreños* (UCS), whose support by several U.S. government agencies beginning in the 1960s made them an obvious choice for administering the land reform program. But initial support languished as the cooperatives were left unattended or abused by corrupt state supervisors. UCS leaders were assassinated by hostile landowners aligned with the hard-line right and indiscriminate violence suppressed reform oriented agrarian activism. Organized solidarity in government zones of control was tempered by the military's distrust of most peasants as potential insurgents, and the overarching goal of preserving clientelist structures of wealth and power (Stout et al. 1990; Schwarz 1991; Sollis 1993b).

Counter-insurgent civic action programs sought to recapture and consolidate political control by restoring municipal authority and with it, the legitimacy of the state. The cornerstone of this program was the re-establishment of municipal authority by constitutional reform in 1983, and the channeling of civic action projects of services and infrastructure in conflictive zones through local mayors. Here too, decision-making was centralized within the political military command structure of the Salvadoran military, but civic-military actions increasingly emphasized the deconcentration of basic service provision to help stabilize strategic conflictive rural areas. Civic action programs included a typical menu of services: employment in construction projects, provision of housing materials, health checkups by military doctors, patriotic music or theater performed by local artists, and political speeches by the local Armed Forces commander or Catholic priest. In both cases of military service and civic action programs, participants were induced to act collectively with a heavy dose of selective incentives (wages, projects, building materials, medicines, children's toys) combined with an imposed constraint (conscription, authoritarian control on mobility, surveillance of private activities). The timing and location of government sponsored civic action programs left little doubt as to the

primary objective - to stabilize the FMLN influenced areas of the countryside by containing local support and capacity for insurgent resistance.

This top-down, stabilizing approach to decentralization provided the design for post-war reconstruction programs. The main government pacification programs were fused in 1992 to create the Secretariat for National Reconstruction (SRN), in which ARENA and Christian Democrat leaders insisted that the municipal government play a central, but subservient, executing role. Greater responsibility for public service provision was delegated to local government, but the purse strings remained tightly controlled by a central government, now leaner as a consequence of privatization but still highly politicized (Rodriquez 1999; Orellana 1997; Castañeda and Fernandez 1995; Morales Ehrlich 1995; Nickson 1995). While the principal goals of the SRN were to integrate some 50,000 ex-combatants on both sides into Salvadoran society and address the reconstruction needs of the 150 most devastated municipalities, the allocation of projects reflected a clear bias against FMLN communities (Murray et al. 1995). Unaccountable GOES influence over reconstruction programs forced several European donors, including the EU, to channel its post-war assistance around the SRN and directly to conflictive regions.

Demands for broader inclusion by FMLN NGOs and these same European donors led to several mid-term reforms in the reconstruction program. In 1996, the bureaucratic remnants of the Secretariat for National Reconstruction, along with the USAID sponsored Municipalities in Action program were folded into an already existing social safety net program, *el Fondo de Inversion Social* (FIS), that had been created to finance small, emergency infrastructure needs in poor communities. The new institution, FISDL, has become the favored governmental channel for local development projects.⁷⁸ Financial and technical infusions by several international donors were needed to shore up the technocratic autonomy of the FISDL, with the goal of transforming what was a patchwork of social safety net programs into a showcase for decentralized and participatory local development. At the same time, the achievement of the primary of goal of political stability permitted the government to vacillate on decentralizing line ministry functions and local control over fiscal resources, despite enthusiastic post-war commitments.

⁷⁸ The letters DL stand for desarrollo local that were appended to the institutional name in 1997.

ARENA post-war decentralized local development efforts have increasingly focused on the FISDL, which was fashioned as an honest broker between NGOs, local government and the poorest communities. Despite new packaging, the FISDL continues to be viewed by many as a top-down effort by the ruling party to retain control over local development as FMLN victories at the municipal level made political capture more difficult. Any political autonomy enjoyed by the FISDL has depended on external financing, which could end in the coming years. In direct competition with COMURES (the Salvadoran Municipal Corporation) a national lobbying organization for municipal advocacy and another state technical assistance agency for municipalities (*El Instituto de Desarrollo Municipal*, ISDEM) the FISDL has steadily traded off stronger alliances with community organizations and NGOs, for closer ties to government in the interest of preserving its own budget.⁷⁹ As a consequence, FISDL funded municipal projects (largely the choice of a fixed menu of social infrastructure) have increasingly become disconnected from questions of economic development, particularly in rural areas.

In the empowerment by invitation model, inequality is addressed indirectly through market competition and individual initiative. Competition and self-interest empower citizens as consumers to choose from a widened selection of commodities, occupations, places of residence, and political representation. Land transfer, for example, is delegated to a market of voluntary buyers and sellers. As a result of noted institutional weaknesses that prevent these markets from working well, asset inequality remains very high in government zones of control. In turn, local elites are more likely to capture the benefits of decentralization. However, modest absolute gains in well-being are sufficient for empowerment.

The state provision of productive resources and services in rural areas flows disproportionately to the dominant private sector gremios (e.g. members of the principal business associations, CAMAGRO, ANEP, ABANSA, ASI). The majority of smallholder agriculture is assisted through various externally funded, state sanctioned, NGO administered social insurance programs (CARE-Fundacampo, IFAD-Prodap, ProChalate, IDB-PAES, UNDP-Prodernor) that tend to prioritize individual strategies over cooperative organization or political advocacy. These government approved development NGOs often prioritize upward vertical accountability to the

⁷⁹ A more recent reorganization of FISDL in 1999 was intended to decentralize the agencies work, by relocating staff to regional offices. There is little information available that these measures have changed the institution's centralist approach taken previously.

external donors over downward accountability to the beneficiary population. Some of these initiatives also tend to operate as islands unto themselves, rarely encouraging local partners to be active participants in larger coalitions. As I show in subsequent chapters, this empowerment by invitation approach to decentralized rural development has facilitated the state's withdrawal from the rural economy unless the provision of state services are monopolized by powerful local elites or demanded by contentious, organized producer groups. Government control zones may be characterized more by the former than the latter. Thus, while the top-down model of decentralization has contributed to the proliferation of local development actors, it has also contributed to their depoliticization and demobilization.

The decisive strength of the ARENA's top-down empowerment by invitation strategy has been stability. Surprisingly, while this approach to decentralization has accompanied the neglect of the rural economy, ARENA maintains a strong rural electoral base through the distribution of selective benefits. Perhaps as a reflection of a transition in economic power within the ruling elite away from the old agrarian elite (particularly with the decline of coffee) and toward the service and manufacturing sector leaders, ARENA has also weathered significant internal upheaval in the leadership of its party. Still, the FMLN has failed to adequately exploit this opportunity of elite realignment to upset ARENA in any of the three post-war Presidential elections. Finally, the ARENA mobilization network has been more effective in establishing a relationship with the ever more influential Salvadoran community in the U.S., placating the political demands of this crucial source of remittance flows that have dramatically softened the party's economic austerity reforms and kept the economy afloat.

6. Summary

Political experiences associated with the government or FMLN control left their imprint on how the state, local government and civil society have responded to political opportunities opened or closed by post-war decentralization. A contest that began in the 1970s to win over the "hearts and minds" of the rural population foreshadowed the rise of NGOs and municipal government as the two dominant and competing forms of social and political organization in postwar reconstruction. NGOs and municipal authorities were initially associated with insurgent and

counter-insurgent projects, respectively. Donors took sides by funding either municipal government (in the case of several bi-lateral donors, mainly USAID) or NGOs working in conflictive zones (in the case of many European aid agencies).⁸⁰ Communities in zones of wartime FMLN control supported NGOs and reserved hostility for many mayors. This pattern of institutional preferences was reversed in zones of government control. NGOs allied with the FMLN have prioritized contentious collective actions to demand expropriative redistribution of assets. Municipalities have emphasized conventional modes of participation to gradually improve lives through expansion of public services.

The national reconstruction program and an array of decentralized anti-poverty programs provided an optimal postwar setting for NGOs and local governments to coordinate local development, but a lack of clarity about appropriate roles and relations between them, and a climate charged by past rivalries, has hindered this goal. As such, decentralization efforts to strengthen local institutions proceeded along two separate tracks, one offering incentives to municipal governments and the other offering incentives to NGOs (Cernea 1989; Blair, Booth, Seligson, Córdova 1995). These tracks correspond to the counter-insurgent positive-sum and insurgent zero-sum notions of power and consensus-conflict approaches to empowerment, respectively.

Wartime tendencies toward institutional competition remain an obstacle to decentralization when coordination is more necessary than ever. The majority of Salvadoran municipalities have fewer than 20,000 residents and despite the benefits of being more in tune with citizen needs, they may be administratively unviable. Efforts to foster inter-municipal and inter-governmental coordination through COMURES have produced mixed results. The "project" orientation of international aid has also contributed to fragmentation of civil society and duplication of work, where production, education, health and environmental projects are conducted in cross-purposes with each other and the line ministries.⁸¹

⁸⁰ This political favoritism began to fade after 1989. See Muijal-Leon (1989). A political genealogy of NGOs is offered by Gonzalez (1991), Foley and Edwards (1996), and MacDonald (1995). Some of the larger, international NGOs (CARE, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International, Catholic Relief Services) also accepted U.S. funding during the war. Most donors were reluctant to fund both NGOs and local government directly.

⁸¹ By the late 1990s six different municipal strengthening programs were operating with little coordination or sharing of results, perhaps explaining the relatively modest, if any, improvement in the state's responsiveness and accountability to local needs. One good example is the health sector. A coalition of health NGOs was formed with purpose of organizing in preparation for opportunities for decentralized care provision. The coalition has had little

Local organizations are left to resolve these obstacles to coordination and convert past political experiences and the autonomy and resources of decentralization into the mutual empowerment of citizen and state - a task for which these local actors on their own may be underqualified. Electoral gains by the opposition FMLN have diminished the suspicion between Salvadoran NGOs and municipal governments. By 2003 FMLN mayors governed many major cities and some 75 municipalities in all. The political right and center have also rushed to form their own NGOs. Some ideologically opposed mayors have even banded together with other civil society organizations at the local level to demand faster decentralization of inefficient, politicized central ministries. As NGOs and municipalities discover a common local development agenda, the Salvadoran government has shifted its support to the FISDL as the trusted interlocutor with local actors.

The emergence of local institutions in post-war El Salvador as solutions to collective action problems illustrate two rival models of decentralized empowerment. Neither, of course, is purely top-down nor bottom-up. Political experiences associated with FMLN rule are laden with an internal tension between the centralism of political command and local pluralism, cooperative norms, and voluntarism of bottom-up politics. As such, the FMLN combines a variety of collective action strategies that emanate from the Contract bargaining strategy set, but with significant capacity to tap Community solidarity, as well as exercise Market incentives and disincentives for participation. Despite its emergence and many positive innovations as a representative political party, the FMLN at times relies on Hierarchy CA strategies that rest upon the vertical command structure of the war but run counter to the other mentioned strategies in the post-war period.

The top-down consensual empowerment model also relies on spontaneously self-coordinating, voluntarist collective actions to resolve the most intractable economic problems of rural development. ARENA tends to continue to operate from a Hierarchy CA strategy basis that has served it well in the party's twenty five year history. The demobilization and reform of the state security forces have limited the Right's ability to repress dissent, and have therefore forced ARENA to diversify its repertoire of CA strategies in the post-war period. The loss of majority

success in holding the government minister accountable to promises of decentralizing service provision resources. An experimental effort to decentralize health services in several municipalities was reversed and re-centralized in 1997.

control in the National Assembly has required greater negotiation (Contract), both among the minor players of its own coalition as well as with opposition parties. ARENA has also had to invest more in Market incentives (a dogmatically loyal press and increasing although still anemic provision of public goods) to preserve its electoral plurality. Community strategies have even received a modicum of ARENA interest, although the goal is to recover the work ethic, respect for property rights and social order that were perceived to exist in the rural sector before the war.

Both models have influenced conventional and contentious modes of post-war participation. The legacies of insurgent and counter-insurgent rule in rural areas present an opportunity to compare the impact of past political experiences (contentious, bottom-up, insurgent versus stabilizing, top-down, and counter-insurgent) on how empowerment strategies are conceptualized, coordinated and deployed by local actors in the design and performance of post-war institutions.

D. METHODOLOGY - COMPARATIVE INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

There is little agreement on the optimal analytical framework to assess empowerment, and attempts to consolidate such an approach are very much in their early stages. The experimental nature of this study therefore requires multiple methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative to assess the relationship outlined above between power resources, agency and achievements, within a changing opportunity structure. Below, I describe these methodologies.

1. 1998 Regional Survey Design & Case Study Municipality Overviews

The paracentral economy of El Salvador was transformed by the combined penetration of cotton and coffee in a way that was quite unlike most of the other conflictive zones of El Salvador, setting in motion a conflict between renter and sharecropping peasants and landowners that

approximated Paige's (1975) classic notion of agrarian revolt.⁸² The expansion of export crops triggered a cycle of displacement of tenant farmers, widespread peasant resistance, the escalation of state repression against peasant protesters, the polarization of reformist and reactionary elites, finally generating the moral indignation and fear that drove many peasants to join in rebellion against the state. The FMLN and Salvadoran Armed Forces fought for control of the zone between 1979 to 1992, splitting the region into large areas of control and influence (as indicated above in Figure 2.1). The intensity of the civil war in the paracentral zone can be summarized by the fact that San Vicente was the only department in El Salvador to report a negative annual population growth rate (-0.33%) between 1971-92 (DIGESTYC, 1997).

The paracentral zone was chosen for this study because of the homogeneity of many socio-economic and geographic factors that fueled the agrarian discontent and are held in common among the surveyed communities. More importantly, however, this region is perhaps unique in terms of the close proximity of insurgent and counter-insurgent communities within the same geographical area over the course of the conflict. During the war, the zone represented two of five political-military theaters organized by the FMLN. The legacy of insurgent influence is illustrated by the expansion of post-war FMLN governance at the municipal level in the region - a reflection of their deep-rooted support among the regional peasant population. Local political competition varies throughout the region, with FMLN electoral support centered in San Vicente, but with growing support in Usulután and persistently low support in La Paz.

The socio-economic features of the paracentral zone, including high quality land and access to economic infrastructure and national markets, permit an authentic debate over economic development rather than manageable subsistence. In other words, the stakes of challenging property rights were and are higher in the paracentral zone than in most other regions. It represents the only region where prized productive assets were contested and won by the FMLN. By studying a zone of economic significance, I am arguing that empowerment has a great deal to do with the acquisition of economic capital, a factor that weakens any empowering outcome in insurgent strongholds in Northern regions.

⁸² Paige argues that peasant revolution is based on rural class structure. Of all types of peasants, sharecroppers or wage working peasants are the most likely revolutionaries, but only when faced with an owner dependent upon agriculture as the primary source of income.

Between August and October 1998, I conducted a regional survey of 912 households designed to explore the variation in tangible and intangible empowerment indicators at the community level. The survey and sample as designed to compare the impact of insurgent and counter-insurgent historical socialization experiences associated with the Salvadoran civil war on various individual and institutional level performance indicators of decentralized development in the post-war period. Three representative case study municipalities were selected and oversampled in equal proportions in order to maximize variation across the municipality as a social context.

My paracentral survey is also structured as a clustered sample approximating the stratified population distribution of the paracentral region of the El Salvador based on the 1992 census with some adjustments for the known population increases in the case study municipalities. The sample was designed to resemble the national and defined regional population distribution within three strata of city sizes, ex-conflictive and rural areas, but surveys were clustered within randomly chosen municipalities (with the exception of the case study municipalities). A regional sample was chosen to permit inferences about the impact of contextual insurgent and counter-insurgent experiences across communities within the entire region. An additional 482 respondents were surveyed in 11 other municipalities, selected randomly within population strata covering the departments of San Vicente, La Paz, and Usulután - generating a total sample of 912.⁸³ Within municipalities, primary sampling units consisted of randomly chosen urban neighborhoods and rural *caseríos*, within which surveyors would fan out to ensure a reasonable distribution. Within households, the respondent was selected according to a quota criteria for gender and age.⁸⁴ Of the sample, 48.7% were women, the average age was 37.5 years, 69.8% were located in official ex-conflictive municipalities, 66.7% were in rural designations, 48% were landowners or renters, and 22% were ex-combatants from both sides. (See Appendix for Tables B.1 survey sample design, Table B.2 list of municipalities surveyed and Appendix C for survey instrument and coding)

⁸³ By secondary municipalities, I refer to non-case study towns where surveys were conducted, but less extensive research was possible. A complete explanation of survey design can be provided on request. See Sample Design description in Table B.1 and B.2 in the Appendix.

⁸⁴ For many ex-conflictive communities, there were no updated local census maps to work from.

A total sample of 912 drawn from a regional population of about 480,000 people, suggests that the confidence interval will be $\pm 3.2\%$.⁸⁵ This means that if the sample were drawn repeated times, 95 percent of the time, the value derived from my sample would be no more than plus or minus 3.2% away from the true value for any given question for the paracentral region population. Figure 2.3 identifies the location of the three oversampled case studies, Tecoluca (155 interviews, insurgent case), the Jiboa Valley (155 interviews, hard-line counter-insurgent case) and San Ildefonso (119 interviews, moderate counter-insurgent case) within the broader sampling area of the paracentral region (the departments of San Vicente, the western half of Usulután and eastern half of La Paz located east of the Jiboa River).⁸⁶ For comparisons between municipal cases, the confidence increases to between $\pm 8-9\%$. For these comparisons, some care will be taken to report whether differences are in fact statistically significant by showing the confidence interval “error bar” graphically or reported the p statistic.

To explore the historically rooted, contextual effects of political experience, I adopt a most similar systems design to compare how differences among decentralization strategies have shaped participation in post-war reconstruction in otherwise similar rural municipalities. I have selected case studies where variation in key independent variables - socio-economic variables, development potential, and geographic parameters are low enough so as not to explain much of the variance in the dependent variable – empowerment. The three case study municipalities – Tecoluca, Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso, each representative of insurgent FMLN, counter-insurgent National Republican Alliance (ARENA) and moderate counter-insurgent Christian Democrat (PDC) party loyalties and political contexts, are similar in almost every way, except for differences in insurgent and counter-insurgent political experiences during the war.

⁸⁵ A population census was conducted in 1992, but was quickly considered obsolete given the massive migration internally and externally that occurred in the early 1990s. Sample design is based loosely on the 1992 municipal population estimates. It is known that cluster samples help reduce survey costs, but increases the confidence interval of the sample by some degree. Determining how much clustering increases the confidence interval depends on the uniformity of a given characteristic shared by residents within and between the clusters. Thus, the design effect of clustering varies with each survey question, and therefore makes it difficult to estimate the loss of precision. Some recent analyses of exit polling have suggested that clustering may lead to a 50% increase in sampling error over simple random sampling.

⁸⁶ The paracentral regional boundaries do not coincide with the national definition of what is considered the paracentral region, but are informed rather by the historical boundaries of the conflict spanning an area that extends from the Rio Jiboa to central Usulután and is bordered by Cabanas to the north and transected by the Lempa River. In addition to being targeted by the first concerted counter-insurgency programs of the war, the communities in this region share many economic and political attributes.

Isolating political experience in the survey analysis will be enabled by reclassifying the survey respondents according to a proposed indicator of political experience (a scale variable that is constructed from a combination of five independent survey and non-survey indicators). This political experience index will allow somewhat more analytical leverage on the testing of the significance of this factor across the entire sample.

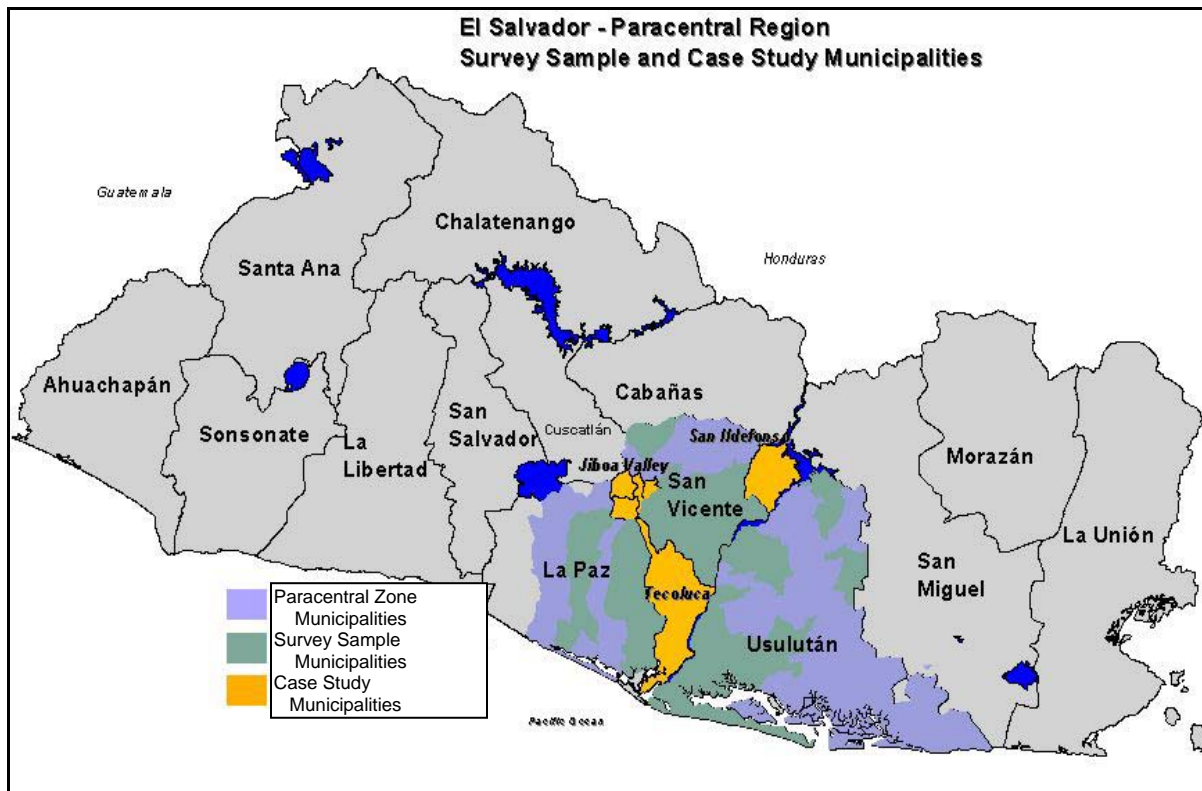


Figure 2.3 Map of El Salvador Paracentral Region, Survey Sample and Case Study Municipalities (all maps are by author unless noted otherwise)

Thus, the principal quantitative analytical procedures employed (OLS Regression, 3 & 4 category ANOVA comparisons) are intended to isolate the significance of political experience as an explanatory factor in the measurable levels of empowerment. Beyond bivariate comparisons of my empowerment indicators between municipalities and categories of political experience, two principal methods will be used to assess the significance of past political experiences on variation in empowerment achievements. I will test the strength of political experiences in explaining several modes of efficacious participation in community and political actions across

the entire survey by regressing participation variables on the contextual variable - political experience, while controlling for several widely accepted indicators of democratic attitudes: a) inter-personal trust, b) support for various political institutions, c) political efficacy, as well as several unconventional indicators of social capital, d) collective efficacy, and e) contentious efficacy skills, in addition to standard socio-economic variables.

Secondly, I will compile all of the indicators for empowerment achievements into a single empowerment index to provide a comprehensive comparison of empowerment resources, intervening attitudes, and achievements in the three case study municipalities and between categories of municipal experience. This way of exploring subnational data at the individual level or aggregate community level in terms of empowerment indicators hopes to avoid the known limitations of ecological inference that overstate the utility of national averages.⁸⁷

The survey included both closed and open ended questions (see survey instrument in Appendix C), and the answers to the open-ended questions were recoded according to the specified instruction. Survey questions were tested and all surveys were supervised in the field by the primary investigator (over 300 surveys were conducted by the primary investigator himself) and each survey was revised before data entry. After data entry, the database was cleaned to minimize coding error on the subsequent analysis.

My survey was interrupted by two unforeseen events. The first was dengue fever, contracted midway through the survey and resulting in three weeks of convalescence (and preliminary data analysis). The second was Hurricane Mitch, which hit El Salvador on October 31, 1998, the day our survey team of ten was attempting to complete the final visit to Jucuapa, Usulután, but were turned back by mudslides and the closing of the only highway over the 15 de Septiembre dam. After a two week delay, we completed our survey.⁸⁸

In the course of conducting the survey, the team visited 98 communities. I personally conducted surveys and extended interviews with key informants during one or more visits to 72

⁸⁷ Gary King's book, *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem*, suggests that national level measurement of key variables tends to obscure within-country variation, thereby producing inaccurate empirical conclusions using aggregate (i.e., "ecological") data to infer discrete individual-level relationships of interest when individual-level data are not available. (1995:I).

⁸⁸ The survey team was composed of 10 of San Vicente's most promising agronomists who were in the final year of studies at the San Vicente branch of the National University. My thanks go to them for their stellar performance in the completion of this survey, their professionalism toward for the participants, and the many insights they shared with me about regional culture and politics.

of the 98 communities that participated. Some visits were for no more than a few hours. In others, I lived for months at a time. My observations about the three case study communities rest on a reasonably solid foundation of evidence built through extended visits, numerous interviews, participant observation and document analysis during a primary field work period that began in January 1998 and ended in April 1999.⁸⁹

2. Complementary Survey Data

The reported responses of the 1998 paracentral regional survey will be compared to the responses to equivalent questions in a 1991 urban survey of San Salvador, and two national surveys (1995 & 1999) conducted by the University of Pittsburgh. Some comparisons will be made with national socio-economic indicators derived from the official multipurpose household economy survey (EHPM) from various years, but particularly 1998. The EHPM is conducted annually by DIGESTYC, the statistical arm of the Ministry of Economy. The survey began in the 1970s, but has improved throughout the 1990s. The sample size increased from several thousand households in 1991 and questionable representation of the rural sector to about 16,000 households now that are more representative samples at the department level (with a +/- 10% confidence interval). Where comparable questions and sample design permit, some comparisons over time will be made of certain empowerment variables.⁹⁰ A descriptive profile of all four survey samples is given in Appendix Table B.3.

Survey data will permit only a cross-sectional analysis of communities, organizations and society at one moment in time. As such, survey data alone are not enough to answer key questions about empowerment involving backward and forward inferences regarding trends in how resources and agency have combined to facilitate empowerment. To make such inferences, I will look to the available relevant secondary literature, as well as more qualitative research into community and institutional histories, key informant interviews, biographies, and participant

⁸⁹ Follow-up research visits to El Salvador since 1999 have permitted additional data collection and validation.

⁹⁰ For a complete description of the 1991, 1995 and 1999 surveys, see Seligson, Córdova Macías, and Cruz (2000) *El Salvador Democracy Audit*. I wish to acknowledge the generous support of Mitchell Seligson who provided access to these original Salvadoran datasets.

observation of the key decision making processes within the case study communities, and participation related to rural development projects.

Because empowerment is not only an instrumental effect, but also has intrinsic qualities, I have collected additional information from interviews and participant observation that is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. A semi-structured survey of development institutional representatives and participant observation in a variety of local and national development processes were designed to assess the level of coordination or competition between these actors. In addition to this information derived from broad historical interviews, these institutional surveys were designed to assess the intrinsic nature of empowerment in the case study municipalities.

3. Institutional Survey

In addition to the formal survey and comparative analysis of national-regional household surveys, I interviewed over 100 organizations (representatives of the Salvadoran government, IFIs, INGOs, NGOs, gremios, community organizations or CSOs) that were stakeholders of some type in the paracentral region. The interviews included questions about development philosophy, financial data, organizational history and structure, decision making processes, active projects in the region, the level of horizontal and vertical coordination with other organizations, and advocacy strategy. The uneven quality of the information obtained (i.e. the non-transparency with regard to providing financial data), does not allow a statistical analysis of this relatively small sample of development practitioners. Yet, these interviews did provide invaluable source of background information about local development finance, collective action strategies, and performance). A list of the institutions interviewed conducted is attached in Appendix C.

One way of describing the organizational field will be a power map of development actors present in each case study municipality. These institutional mappings will be one means of addressing organizational density, diversity and linkages, as well as provide an indication of the various sources of development finance.

4. Participatory Observation

During the 16 month field work season, and in follow up visits to the country, I participated as a research observer in a wide variety of local development processes. The most relevant of these included municipal planning meetings and *cabildo abiertos*; NGO assemblies, project visits and planning meetings; political party campaign events, primaries and conventions; protest marches; events and meetings convened by donors or the government; regular meetings of San Vicente Departmental Assembly of Mayors, the Jiboa Valley Microregion, and the Tecoluca Municipal Development Council.

5. Historical Interviews

The lack of comparable longitudinal survey data precludes rigorous analysis of change over time. For that reason, historical evidence to reconstruct key aspects of insurgent and counter-insurgent political experience was gathered through a survey of the relevant secondary literature and key informant interviews. These historical interviews provide the foundation for the pre-war and wartime analyses presented in Chapters 5 & 6. It is worth noting that the validation of key historical events in government zones of influence and access to former soldiers or officers in the paracentral zone were considerably difficult and limited by the number of sources from this part of the investigation.

E. CONCLUSION

The Salvadoran case illustrates how institutional solutions to the decentralization's collective action problems have gravitated toward local government, NGOs and social safety nets. These local actors have served as powerful forces for asset redistribution and democratization in some

areas and have strengthened the hand of predatory local and national elites in others. My comparative overview of insurgent FMLN and counter-insurgent GOES zones of control and influence suggests that the capacity of local collective action to confront entrenched inequality is more likely in the former than in the latter. In FMLN zones of influence, I expect the specific developmental roles assigned to local actors to emphasize contestation and transformation of local and national inequalities, a prioritization of horizontal (between-group) and vertical coordination (upward and downward accountability) in local economic development initiatives. In government zones of influence, where social inequality is viewed as a given and moreover, has not been ameliorated through prior local development actions of contestation, I expect accommodative empowerment strategies will tend to prioritize uncoordinated local action.

This portrayal of the Salvadoran case suggests a qualification of the empowerment model presented in Chapter one. The political opportunity represented by FMLN, ARENA, or Christian Democrat influence in reconfiguring elite power and organizational mobilization networks to resist or stabilize inequality has narrowed or expanded the strategic choices available to rural populations in the post-war period.

This comparative institutional framework will prove useful to the extent that it helps answer the three questions identified at the outset: Under what conditions does decentralization work in postwar El Salvador, why has the local institutional solution to decentralized collective action gravitated toward local government and NGOs, and finally, how well have local actors (or the state) performed in their respective decentralized roles.

To answer these questions, some have looked to Tocqueville, emphasizing the significance of a vibrant culture of civic association marked by habits of restraint and moderation, capable of keeping a both weak state and the “unreflecting passions of the multitude” in check, and thereby locating the wellsprings of U.S. political and economic prosperity.⁹¹ Tarrow has argued the reverse that cyclical patterns of civic and uncivic political mobilization and quiescence are determined less by custom or habit, than by opportunities for action produced by state consolidation. Decentralization is conceived as a bottom-up empowerment process in the view of the latter, a top-down empowerment process in the former.

A comparative institutional analysis of decentralized development in postwar El Salvador captures and compares both empowerment strategies by applying the tools of social movement

⁹¹ from Tocqueville, *Democracy*, p. 272

theory to encompass the structure, strategy and symbology of contentious and convention political action.

III. CHAPTER THREE: A “QUIET REVOLUTION”? THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DECENTRALIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Decentralization of power and of spending, coupled with democratization, has dramatically transformed the local political landscape in Latin America, in what some have called a “quiet revolution.” A new model of governing is emerging in the region. (World Bank 1997: 166)

Three local institutional innovations have flourished as a consequence of this decentralizing turn in development policy. Mayors were elected directly in only three Latin American countries in 1980. Now, 18 Latin American countries elect their mayors, and six other countries appoint mayors indirectly through elected municipal councils.⁹² The share of government spending by state and local governments has also increased substantially from about 15 to 20% in the last decade, although still far short of the industrialized country sub-national expenditure average of 35% (World Bank 1997). Secondly, NGOs, civic associations and grassroots groups have proliferated across Latin America, resurrecting interest in the role of civil society in national development.⁹³ Finally, social safety nets, which were initially deployed as emergency demand-

⁹² Sub-national elections are now held in 71 out of 75 multiparty democracies worldwide for which data are available. Freedom House (1998).

⁹³ Since the late 1980s, the number of NGOs operating in parts of Latin America, Africa and Asia has almost doubled, with estimates as high as 50,000. In Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent (CIS) countries, NGOs may have increased three or fourfold from a very low base level in 1989. In some OECD countries, operating expenditures in the voluntary or NGO sector now account for almost 4% of GDP (World Bank 1997: 113). Northern aid channeled through NGOs has also jumped dramatically, from \$1 billion in 1970 to \$7.2 billion in 1990, perhaps twice this amount if loans are included. Yet the impact of NGOs or local governments is not necessarily reflected by their spending power. Total aid channeled through NGOs still only represents 3.3% of all Official Development Aid and 0.02-0.05% of total OECD GNP (UNDP 1998). Total non-governmental aid expenditure (est. \$10 billion 1996) represents just a fraction of net private capital flows to low and middle income countries (\$285.5 billion), total bilateral and multilateral developmental finance (\$88.9 billion) or total charity spending in the U.S. (\$700 billion (*New York Times* Oct. 18, 1999). Total sub-national government expenditures in the developing world also represent only a modest portion of total government expenditures - between \$86.4 - \$144 billion (15-25%) (UNDP 1998; World Bank 1999). Sub-national government spending in developing countries equals \$15-30 per capita, compared with \$1,345 per capita sub-national expenditures in OECD countries.

driven (often externally financed) anti-poverty programs, have now assumed the status of permanent institutional interlocutors between communities and the state in almost every country. Considering Latin America's long centralist tradition, this remarkable shift toward decentralization has been described as a nothing less than a "*quiet revolution*."

In the view of many scholars, decentralization has assumed the status of political panacea. Decentralized systems are held to increase democratic legitimacy by transferring resources and responsibilities to local actors, while simultaneously improving the fiscal environment. Decentralization in Latin America is also guided by Tocqueville's admiring perception of the rich and harmonious U.S. associational life, which the *ancien regime* in France lacked as a buffer between society and an invasive, centralizing and corrupt state.

Yet, applying Tocqueville to the present often comes at the risk of oversimplification and mis-specification. Tocquevillian localism has come to embody a development prescription of a weak state and an active but accommodative society. Tocqueville found in U.S. local governments and associations a protection not only against state despotism, but also from the "tyranny of the majority," whose radical egalitarian and democratic provocations had paved the way for despotism in France. While in America, "the general equality of condition among the people," may have appeared far more favorable than in Western Europe, other accounts demur.⁹⁴ Moreover, organized, disruptive opposition prodded by the changing opportunity structure of state consolidation may have done as much, if not more, than the orderly New England town meetings, to level 19th century differences and advance democracy. "Praising the weak American state whose presence could barely be seen at the grassroots, and ascribing associational development to that absence, Tocqueville overlooked in America how a contentious - and often ugly - mass politics in rough dialectic with the state was shaping how people acted collectively" (Tarrow 1994:65). Decentralized access to the state did not excise state power nor did it quell "un-civic" local action.

In Latin America, despite their prominent billing and the facilitative premises of decentralization, the capacity of civil society associations and local governments as catalysts in transitions from authoritarian rule has clearly not been matched when it comes to effecting more

⁹⁴ Tocqueville's traveling companion, Beaumont, suggested that his friend was not very good at numbers. Zinn 1980: 213, and Chapter ten). On Tocqueville, American democracy and inequality see Wilentz (1988), and Pessen (1973).

accountable, equitable, better performing post-authoritarian governance. The “paradox of decentralization,” as one practitioner has put it, is that decentralization demands “more centralization and more sophisticated political skills at the national level” (Rudolf Hommes, ex-minister of state in Colombia, 1998, cited in Tendler 1997: 142).⁹⁵ The local development model formulated for El Salvador and dominant in most Latin American countries, avoids this paradox by pre-supposing but not adequately specifying a new and improved division of labor between civil society, the state, and the market.

Given decentralization’s mixed record in Latin America, the principal question to be addressed in this chapter is why local actors and institutions, municipal governments, civil society organizations and social safety nets, have emerged as key development actors in policy areas where the state has presumably failed? Are these reforms *pushed down* by stability-minded elites from above, or *pulled down* by subordinate, excluded challengers from below? The political and economic transitions literature has clearly privileged the former, treating mass protest and social movements as brief or exogenous factors to political and economic reform processes controlled by competing elite factions (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Higley and Gunther 1992; Huntington 1991; Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Malloy and Seligson 1987; Haggard and Kaufman 1995). However, a renewed interest in civil society’s role in democratization has begun to systematically explore the link between popular politics from below and regime change.⁹⁶

Utilizing a comparative institutional approach, I contend that neither a top-down or bottom-up perspective is sufficient by itself in explaining the emergence of decentralization or the performance of local institutions. NGOs, municipal governments, and social safety nets could simply not have thrived the way they have over the past two decades without a broad societal base of support and some vested interest within the state. Instead, I argue that it is the interaction of elite and non-elite strategies of empowerment that has produced this unique

⁹⁵ This view is consistent with Kahler’s (1990) “orthodox paradox” that neoliberal orthodoxy implied the imposition of radical policy changes that simultaneously restricted and invoked the state as a implementer of these changes.

⁹⁶ Among those works that have assigned a more central role to non-elite actors are Moore (1966), Karl (1990), Reuschmeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992), Putnam (1993), Fox and Brown (1998) Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco (1997), and Keck and Sikkink (1998)

consensus for decentralized development.⁹⁷ In this chapter, I trace the political and economic transition in Latin America where decentralization has become a central tenet. Consistent with the theoretical model for assessing empowerment, top-down, and elite led, stabilizing approaches to decentralization tend to be associated with an empowerment by invitation strategy, and bottom-up, contentious, mass challenges to decentralization tend to be associated with an empowerment through conflict approach. The revival of municipal government and social safety nets have emerged from the former, while the latter has historical links to NGOs.

This chapter will proceed in two parts. In the *first section*, I discuss the current support for decentralization as a legacy of the collapse in support for the developmentalist state in Latin America. From above, decentralization became part of the neoliberal agenda to restructure the state and fend off the most radical redistributive demands. From below, decentralization has been seized as a way of expediting the demise of authoritarian rule but increasingly to resist neoliberal reforms. In the *second section*, I review the empirical evidence of political and fiscal decentralization and the emergence of municipal governance, NGOs and social safety nets in Latin America. This section also reviews some of the theoretical arguments (fiscal federalism and participatory development) upon which the emergence of local development institutions is grounded. I call attention to the gap between theoretical expectations and the limited evidence on local institutional performance. A goal of this chapter is to place the Salvadoran case within a regional framework of decentralized local development.

A. THE DECLINE OF THE DEVELOPMENTALIST STATE (1930-1982)

Centralist rule in Latin America is not simply an artifact of the military and authoritarian regimes of the 1960s and 1970s. It is a vestige of the region's colonial heritage (Veliz 1990). In fact, an urban centralist tradition has long co-existed with a fairly decentralized and privatized peripheral authoritarianism under semi-feudal local elites. However, with the resources and demands associated with the export expansion of the mid 19th century, institutions such as a standing army, security forces, central banks, public education and tax systems, and to a lesser extent

⁹⁷ Recent scholarship that has applied this hybrid approach include Bates (1989), Roseberry, Gudmundson, and Samper (1995), Linz and Stepan (1996), Markoff (1996), Evans (1997), Collier (1999) and Wood (2000).

transportation and communication systems, provided the state with political autonomy and centralized power vis a vis contending elite factions.

Latin America's centralist political economic legacy has endured, but events of the past 15 years provide evidence that a transition might be underway. The support for decentralization is due in part to a shift in the political opportunity structure for development, characterized by the global expansion of democracy and the ascendance of neoliberal structural adjustment over socialism as the dominant development model. However, the origins of this decentralizing current can be traced to the collapse of the Latin American developmentalist state following the oil shocks of the 1970s and the debt crises of the 1980s. Democracy and neoliberalism both represent expressions of "society against the state" critiques of developmentalism and socialism. Each process has contributed to the rise of NGOs, municipal government and social safety nets as organizational responses by IFIs, government and social movements in competition over the meaning and outcome of development.

The current support for decentralization is very much a legacy of Latin American developmentalism. The Latin American experience of centralist rule corresponded to a fifty-year interval of state-led development policy of primary or secondary stage import substitution industrialization.⁹⁸ Inward-looking and populist, this period of *national capitalism* emerged in response to the global economic shocks of the 1930s' economic crises and the unpredictable cycles of access to U.S. and other Northern markets during international wars. This policy mix of incentives and constraints triggered a shift from predatory oligarchic rule to nationalist and developmentalist experiments. By nationalist, I refer to the export pessimism and political cynicism toward the "free market" advice of the U.S. that inspired expropriations of foreign

⁹⁸ ISI was an inward-looking development policy that was stimulated first by the catastrophic loss of markets and external credit after the Great Depression and then deepened by the ideas of CEPAL structuralists such as Raul Prebisch. Prebisch (1950) argued that secular terms of trade favored elastic, capital-intensive goods of the North over inelastic, labor-intensive, primary goods of the South. While there was considerable variation across the region, the early internal variant of ISI (1920-1955) promoted domestic industrialization through protectionist measures that included an overvalued exchange rate, wage and price controls, credit subsidies, import tariffs on consumer goods. Secondary ISI (1955-1980) focused more on the export promotion of strategic sectors, but as Bulmer-Thomas argues, Latin America largely missed the boat by turning inward during the dramatic post-war expansion of international trade. Between 1946 and 1975, Latin America's share of total world exports fell from 13.5% to 4.4%. It was also during this period that the region achieved its highest sustained rate of economic growth (1994: 270).

owned industries.⁹⁹ Developmentalism became associated with rapid, large-scale, vertically integrated industrialization, financed through debt (due to low national savings) and a calculated indifference to questions of internal redistribution and Third World solidarity (Sikkink 1991).

State-led development was organized around two broad mobilization networks that drew energy and leadership from competition between traditional and modernizing elites, permitting an unprecedented degree of cross-class and cross-regional alliance.¹⁰⁰ Following Gibson's analysis of populist electoral politics in Mexico and Argentina, I focus here on the changing nature of state support from rural (peripheral) and urban (metropolitan) electoral coalitions. Gibson argues that during the height of populism, the labor dominated metropolitan coalition functioned as the "policy" coalition, supporting and garnering most of the benefits from ISI development strategies. The "seedier side of populism," is constituted by the peripheral coalition, which hinged ISI's electoral stability to the preservation of traditional agrarian relations between lord and peasant. To use Barrington Moore's phrasing, the politics of this "reactionary alliance" between rural and urban elite-mass mobilization networks and the state are crucial to understanding the role of local actors in the shift from centralist to decentralized development. As long as the populist coalition was stable, little authentic space for alternative bottom-up demand making was possible.

From a macro-economic standpoint, the results of developmentalism were impressive. Between 1945 and 1973, Latin American GDP grew at an unprecedented 5.3% annually, and per capita output climbed at nearly 3% (Thorp 1998: 160). As the workforce became more urban and real wages generally rose for certain city dwellers, Latin America seemed to be fulfilling the expectations of modernization theorists. In the idiom of the principal development discourse of the time, the region had reached its "turning point" (Lewis 1954), or "takeoff stage" (Rostow

⁹⁹ Mexican oil under Cardenas, 1938; Argentine railways under Peron in 1948; United Fruit plantations in Guatemala under Arbenz in 1952; Bolivia tin under Paz Estensoros in the 1952, followed by Gulf Oil in 1969; oil in Ecuador in 1976; iron-ore and oil and in Venezuela in 1975; Chilean copper under Allende in 1972; Costa Rican oil refining in 1969;

¹⁰⁰ This discussion is limited to sketching broad contours of change in Latin America, which must unfortunately oversimplify complex and contradictory variation in the specific forms and timing of state formation, elite competition and pacts, and popular mobilization.

1960) or had begun to reap the “advantages of backwardness” according to Gerschenkron (1962).¹⁰¹

Latin American elites legitimized the unequal and often undemocratic partnership between ruler and ruled by promising an inevitable payoff of prosperity. This social contract was sufficient for overcoming collective action problems. Indeed, expectations were raised that motivated unprecedented political challenges to the distribution of the benefits of growth and to the democratic limits set by populist authoritarian ruling coalitions. The first challenges, mostly led by labor unions, were contentious but demands were often particularistic.

Disequilibria in Latin America’s national capitalist model were apparent by the late-1950s, threatening the social contract and adding fuel to the fire of local opportunism. The central contradiction to ISI can be traced to agriculture’s subsidization of industry. Under cheap food policies designed to benefit urban economic activity, rural livelihoods had either stagnated or deteriorated for the peasantry between 1930 and 1960 (Griffin 1974). Disincentives to increase agricultural output set limits to ISI, ultimately increasing food imports which further exacerbated the problem of distorted rural markets (Bates 1981). The 1959 Cuban revolution validated elite fears of region-wide peasant rebellions.¹⁰² In direct response, the U.S. Alliance for Progress rapidly inaugurated land reforms throughout Latin America, followed in rapid succession by “Green revolution” productivity enhancing seeds and inputs, integrated rural development projects and finally, programs targeting the basic needs of small farmers. Most reforms failed to reach any but the upper strata of peasants, which were strategically segmented and converted into a conservative firewall that politically divided the peasantry and ensured the continued production of cheap food for urban diets.¹⁰³ However, the threat of expropriation and the incentives of near exclusive access to credit, technology and resources, did induce the modernization of some traditional estates into more competitive commercial farms.

¹⁰¹ See Lipset (1959) for the classic view of modernization theory. Estimates of population shift suggest that Latin America was 67% rural in 1940, but had dropped to 40% by 1969 and 26% by 1997. Wilkie (1990) and World Bank (2000).

¹⁰² In addition to direct transfers of surplus revenues, a cheap food policy to offset urban wage demands, maintained through over-valued exchange rate and cheap U.S. food imports, condemned 50 to 70 million Latin American smallholders to a subsistence living (less than \$75 per capita annually) (de Janvry 1981: 85).

¹⁰³ For an analysis of the political and economic motives for agrarian reformism in the 1960s, see de Janvry (1981). This counter-insurgent motive was also inherent to reforms that occurred before the Cuban revolution but in the midst of local peasant insurgencies, Mexico (1917), Guatemala (1952), Bolivia (1954) and Venezuela (1959).

The agrarian reforms had the dual effect of strengthening capitalist farming while diffusing the political tension among the rest of the peasantry in Latin America, but left the underlying social structure of agrarian inequality largely unchanged. Moreover, while the intent of land redistribution may have been inspired by a decentralizing impulse to break up inefficient, semi-feudal systems of production and weaken political opposition, through the creation of a complex of rural institutions the state became the prime beneficiary (Grindle 1986). In short, agrarian reforms centralized state authority in the countryside, thereby ensuring a balance of power between metropolitan and peripheral elites.

This combined success and failure of land reform in dealing with the region's rural unrest accelerated rural to urban migration at rates impossible for industrial growth to absorb. Insufficient consumer demand for capital goods and low growth in tax revenues, which peaked at only 17.2% of GDP in 1970, created a growing fiscal imbalance.¹⁰⁴ Low export growth and increasing imports (including food and luxury items) created balance of payments problems, forcing Latin American countries to seek the first IMF stabilization loans.¹⁰⁵ Loan conditions required recipients to consider, for the first time in the post-war period, recessionary policies (high interest rates, devaluation, and cuts in public spending). Inability to finance the second stage of ISI (deepening) with national savings contributed to a greater reliance on foreign direct investment and debt.

The 1973 Nairobi speech by then World Bank president McNamara publicly admitted that the benefits of the growth-oriented development strategies of the 1950s and 1960s were failing to reach the poorest. At the center of the crisis of developmentalism was a tension between growth and distribution. Despite massive investments in state-led industrial transformation, the benefits were captured by a small politically powerful coalition of agrarian and commercial elites who restricted education and other social "entitlements", especially in rural areas. The footing for a modernizing middle class was effectively removed. Despite a declared nationalist agenda, Latin America's elites came to identify more with their peers in the

¹⁰⁴ IMF, various years for all of Latin America. The one exception, Venezuela, used oil rents to boost central government revenue to 34.6 % of GDP in 1975, which was approximately three times higher than the percentage in Mexico and Brazil (IDB, 1983: 356).

¹⁰⁵ Thorp associates the first IMF stabilization package with Chile in 1947, just two year's after the Fund's creation, and another for Mexico 1954. Such packages were extended to many other Latin American countries during the 1960s.

North than their fellow citizens. The economic result was a dual internal market of luxury and subsistence consumption that proved insufficient to finance local industrialization. The unequivocal results of Latin American ISI included a falling global share of exports, the increasing dependence on foreign capital, and a growing gap between developed economies and their own. Divisions emerged between industrialists looking for export markets and agrarian elites demanding trade and monetary protections.

Inequality also deepened political disequilibria, as state strategies of co-optation under conditions of declining real wages exhausted the patience of urban consumers and peasants. Unleashed by episodic clientelist mobilization strategies but lacking effective democratic mechanisms, class interests threatened independent action against a now divided elite. This unstable combination of political and economic vulnerability reduced national sovereignty, entrenched inequality, sharpened elite divisions and mass dissent proved explosive. A generation of bureaucratic-authoritarian rulers called upon themselves to contain the fallout by overthrowing unstable elected regimes and cracking down on dissent (Huntington 1968; O'Donnell 1973).

Military rule underscored the weakness of democratic institutions associated with the developmental state by the ease with which it suppressed civil society and restricted (and thereby safeguarded) the political perquisites of feuding elites. Latin American dictatorships had effectively carried out a de-municipalization of political authority (Nickson 1995). New central government agencies were created that stripped local governments of many powers. Most local officials were appointed. In 1960, of the twenty major countries of Latin America, only four were multi-party democracies and none elected their mayors.¹⁰⁶ Centralized parties and military governments negotiated their exit and strategically devolved power to lower tier elites in order to simultaneously co-opt and fragment the bases of political opposition, and thus preserve stability. Democratic institutions, including competitive national elections, existed prior to the authoritarian period in Latin America. However local democratic governance is a fairly new phenomenon.

Bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes intensified political and economic centralization by deepening the state's role in planning and production activities. Despite establishing effective

¹⁰⁶ The date underscores the fact that local democracy was virtually absent before bureaucratic-authoritarian rule.

social control and unprecedented political autonomy for the state, authoritarian regimes failed to resolve the economic disequilibria of ISI. This final chapter in Latin American developmentalism began with accelerated growth due to the availability of cheap credit provided by surplus petro-dollars and brief spikes in commodity prices. This gave the temporary illusion of prosperity, initiated apparent improvements in welfare and equity and suspended fiscal concerns regarding deepening balance of payment problems and the slowing of global economic growth. A frenetic lending boom in the early 1970s fueled higher public expenditures (wage increases) and fed inflationary growth throughout Latin America.¹⁰⁷ However, these resource windfalls all too frequently were diverted from productive investment into speculative investment (tourism, real estate versus manufacturing or industry), luxury consumption and capital flight.¹⁰⁸ Rates of gross fixed capital investment, the Achilles heel of Latin American development, increased substantially during this period as a proportion of GDP. However, investment remained well below developed country and East Asian rates of 30% and higher and was highly subsidized by the public sector.

Precipitated by the warning signs of fiscal imbalances apparent for nearly a decade but ignored by lax IFI supervision, the 1982 debt crisis brought the state-led period of high growth to a crashing, unceremonious halt.¹⁰⁹ Latin American debt exploded from \$100 per capita in 1970 to \$745 in 1980, while per capita GDP and wages declined. The debt crisis severely

¹⁰⁷ Real growth in GDP between 1960-70 was 5.0% and between 1970-1980 was 4.9% (World Bank 1990a). One sign Latin America's debt-led growth period was not overly competitive or sustainable was the drop in manufacturing as a share of GDP from its peak in 1973 at 26% to 22.5% in 1995. Thorp (1997: 160).

¹⁰⁸ The Mexican case is most instructive as a public-private sector failure to "fix" loan and oil revenues in productive investment. While 50% of manufacturing assets were controlled by foreign firms in 1972, the oil boom was associated with the shift in private investment from industry to higher profits in real estate. The public share of fixed investment filled the gap, increasing from 25% in 1950 to 66% in 1978. E.V.K. Fitzgerald clearly shows that investment supply was never a resource scarcity problem, but one of distribution (1977).

¹⁰⁹ A 1981 IMF evaluation on the eve of the crisis reflected the level of negligence among the IFIs to the pending financial disaster as well as the IFIs and private banks' willingness to lend even after export earnings and interest rates had turned unfavorable to Latin American debtors. "The overall debt situation during the 1970s adapted itself to the sizable strains introduced in the international payments system...Though some countries experienced difficulties, a generalized debt management problem was avoided, and in the aggregate the outlook for the immediate future does not give cause for alarm" (Nowzad 1982: 13). Mexico defaulted in 1982. The World Bank also had issued economic forecasts in 1980 that were overly optimistic, which encouraged greater borrowing. The debt crisis is perhaps better understood as a single stage in a series of cascading crises that began with rising oil prices, rising interest rates, debt, and declining terms of trade for nearly all Latin American exports, including oil. See Williamson (1993) for discussion of the Washington Consensus on Structural Adjustment policies.

delegitimized the inward-oriented developmental state model in Latin America and ruptured the urban – rural elite balance of power on which it was grounded in two significant ways.¹¹⁰ While previous coalitions had partnered with foreign capital for major joint investments, debt stabilization forced Latin America to cede tremendous policy making autonomy to international actors. Most countries suffered a loss of a decade of growth, hyperinflation, increased unemployment and poverty, greater income inequality and a drop in the average real wage.¹¹¹ Renewed lending and eventual resumption of foreign direct investment were made conditional by the IFIs on the implementation of structural adjustment reforms – most of which centered on a dramatic reduction in the state’s role in the economy and a shift in the cost of the reforms to the lower classes. These included the privatization of state owned production enterprises and social expenditures, trade liberalization through the reduction of tariffs, the elimination of subsidies to private enterprises and consumer goods, wage controls, price deregulation, a restrictive money policy, tax reform and often the devaluation of the local currency (Williamson 1990). A central condition of renewed lending, imposed by the IMF and international creditors, has been the downsizing of what neoliberal reformers diagnosed as an inefficient, bloated or overextended public sector.¹¹² However, it is important to correct a popular misperception about the Latin American state. Over the past four decades, governments in Latin America have been and continue to be small by comparison to industrialized economies or the economies of other regions, significant growth occurred in the 1970s prior to the debt crisis.

¹¹⁰ For Argentina and Chile in the early 1980s, and followed later in the decade by Peru, Argentina for a second time, Bolivia, Brazil and Nicaragua, hyperinflation may have done more symbolic damage to the image of the developmental state than debt.

¹¹¹ For Latin America as a region, between 1980 and 1990, real wages fell by 13%, real minimum wages declined by 31%, poverty increased from 35% to 41% and social spending fell by 6% (Thorp 1998: 221).

¹¹² See Krueger (1993, 1995), Buchanan and Tollison (1981), Krueger and Bates, (1994). The literature on reform of the state within the so-called Washington Consensus package of reforms, shares a common thread of empowerment through decentralization with two other contemporaneous bodies of literature. The New Public Management movement to “reinvent government” seeks to improve performance by prescribing greater autonomy and discretion to lower tier agencies and employees (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). The “Quality Circle” literature on industrial workplace reforms seeks to transform all workers into thinking contributors to firm decision making processes (Applebaum and Batt 1994). As noted in the previous chapter, both streams of professional advice reinforce the stabilizing-consensual tendency of empowerment by delinking participation from agenda-setting power. Both have been criticized for their thinly disguised motive of undermining the bargaining capacity of public and private sector unions. These claims of depolitization and demobilization of labor are pertinent to my critique of consensual empowerment approaches in Latin American decentralized development.

After the first structural adjustment reforms, Latin American average central government expenditures averaged 22.6% of GDP between 1990-1994, about third less than the 35.9% spent by OECD countries, and substantially less than the 26-27% spent by East Asian and all developing countries during the same time period (World Bank 1997; CEPAL 1998). This gap increased further as second and third generation reforms continued to pare away the Latin American state. Thus, one clear consequence of structural adjustment reforms is a decline in Latin American government spending from a pre-debt crisis peak to levels consistent with the early 1970s, while OECD states have doubled in size and East and South Asian government spending have increased by almost the same magnitude. By even modest Latin American standards, El Salvador has maintained anemic spending levels at no more than 12% of GDP, underscoring one element of its character as a weak state.

Privatization of state owned enterprises and steep cuts in social spending effectively eroded social protections that an already small public sector was incapable of providing to vulnerable sectors of the population (Nelson 1990; Mesa-Lago 1994). Recessionary policies and economic mismanagement during initial stabilization period (1982-1989) contributed to hyperinflation, sharply increased unemployment and contributed to shortages of goods and services. Austerity riots and other outbreaks of political violence forced or accelerated the emergency passage of supplemental social and political stabilization measures.¹¹³ The intensification of armed insurgencies in El Salvador, Peru, Guatemala, Colombia, and to a lesser extent, in Southern Mexico, also influenced the introduction of such reforms. Many local NGOs were formed during this same period as informal service providers and political advocates of austerity's victims.

At the heart of the crises sparked by the riots of late 1980's was the perception among Northern states and the IFIs that unstable political conditions would issue a return to populist state policies of the past or worse, provoke greater insurgent violence. The architects of structural adjustment viewed economic growth and its purported macro-economic underpinnings of low inflation, increased exports, a decline in the state's role in the economy and an increase in

¹¹³ Walton and Seddon (1994) make the clearest argument for emergency social programs in response to violence, listing significant violent events in Peru (1976), Jamaica (1979), Argentina (1982) Venezuela (1989), Bolivia (1983), Brazil (1983), Mexico (1986) and the Dominican Republic (1984). For a different interpretation of the link between these events and the timing or purpose of decentralization reforms, see Jolly and Stewart (1987), Jolly and Graham (1994), World Bank (1990)

private domestic investment as the highest priorities for recovering economies. All other social indicators were expected to follow suit. During the early 1990s, modest advances in lowering poverty and inequality achieved during the 1970s were quickly reversed. It was soon apparent the neither inequality nor poverty would improve despite restored growth in Latin America.

While the austerity riots returned poverty alleviation to the top of the IFI agenda in 1990, decentralization was introduced less as a means for lowering poverty than as a shield to protect the fragile adjustment reform processes. In order to mitigate the costs of adjustment and preserve political stability in countries undergoing reform, special "safety net" programs (Social Investment Funds, Emergency Social Funds, Social Action Programs, etc.) were introduced to assist people adversely affected by the unavoidable effects of adjustment.¹¹⁴ It was at this moment that the first fiscal and political decentralization measures were also introduced.

Most scholarship on democratic transitions has focused on the crafting of pacts by civilian elites as the principal author of the political and economic reforms of the 1980s. Some argue that mass movements were mobilized only as a consequence of elite strategies, and therefore attribute to contentious politics from below only a supporting role in the democratization narrative. "The transition to democracy in Latin America has *never* been revolutionary," the World Bank concludes, "instead, most Latin American cases were transitions from above, in which traditional elites remained in control and successfully used some combination of compromise and force to retain at least some of their power" (Burki, Perry and Dillinger 1999: 32). Democratization from above is framed as an orderly affair, safely conducted by elites, who therefore continue to merit special privileges as stewards of post-transition institution building.

Nevertheless, the institutionalization of competitive elections both nationally and locally had the very real effect of opening political structures to wider participation and expanding citizens' demand-making capacity as well as the field of political elites who must compete more frequently for local support. Democratization upset elite alliances, restored certain legitimacy to some political institutions, and enfranchised new political actors. Democratization also

¹¹⁴ There are differences among social safety net programs, yet most share the following features: they are national, multi-sectoral, target vulnerable populations, and are seen as short-term and complementary rather than substitutive of state provided services, they tend to be designed to act in a more efficient, flexible, and faster way than most line ministry programs. The main difference involves the level of direct government coordination (supply-based vs. demand-based projects) and reliance on decentralized agencies and organizations for administration.

improved safeguards for the legal political activity of minority or opposition groups, offering increased potential leverage in holding political leaders accountable. Political opposition movements to the dominant parties have frequently staged challenges from municipal office, and many of the NGOs now present in Latin America first emerged to contest authoritarian regimes.¹¹⁵ From this local foothold, opposition parties and civil society have struggled to expand the meaning of democracy beyond the pluralist, procedural and electoral focus.

The democratic opening has generally favored urban opposition movements over the more isolated rural contests where personalist and authoritarian enclaves have been able to resist the pressure of transparent electoral processes. Resource poor opposition movements typically have been less effective competing in the countryside with local elites backed by the ruling party. Massive rural to urban migration and increasing rural poverty and unemployment during the 1980s reduced the electoral weight of the rural sector and diminished the capacity of rural elites to deliver these votes. Democratization therefore shifted political attention to the cities, where the swollen ranks of politically uncommitted migrants proved to be a decisive constituency for any successful electoral coalition.

Consequently, the ascent of neoliberal reform, according to Gibson, involved, “replacing the mobilizational power of labor with the financial power of business as the foundation of the metropolitan coalition’s electoral organization” (1997: 360). This shift from labor to business, in turn, forced ruling elites to circumvent sectoral and traditional party leaders, and buttress both the urban and rural electoral bases. Both constituencies were hit hard by painful adjustment reforms, displacing many from clientelist organizations. Preserving the status quo legitimacy of traditional elite rule in Latin America required institutional innovations in order to appeal to the newly unorganized segments of the working class and peasantry as well as the previously unorganized informal service sector. This double achievement of shrinking the state and stabilizing the metropolitan-peripheral coalition is precisely where neoliberal reformers and traditional (agrarian-based) party elites joined forces to promote decentralization to local actors.

Despite the declining electoral weight of rural voting districts, Gibson may understate the political importance of decentralized distributive programs designed to strengthen the patronage

¹¹⁵ In addition to the Christian Democrat opposition to the military regime in El Salvador, other examples of municipal level political opposition include the PT in Brazil and PRD and PAN in Mexico. Opposition parties have also reaped the benefits of local electoral support when those elections have boosted the proportional windfall for opposition candidates in coincidental national representative elections.

system and regulate the peripheral coalition. The politics of decentralization programs and SSNs can be understood as functioning to preserve or contest the distribution of rural votes as a form of political insulation for neoliberal governments in Latin America as they reformulated their metropolitan coalition.

Neoliberal reforms destabilized the urban-based “metropolitan” coalitions - producing what the World Bank referred to as the “conjunctural poor”. Structural adjustment displaced key constituencies in the urban coalition (organized labor, civil servants, industry oriented to the domestic market). However, others (internationally competitive business and labor, national business oligopolies) were rewarded through privatization, investment and autonomy. Finally and perhaps most importantly, distributive programs, such as revenue sharing transfers to local governments and SSNs, were increasingly directed toward both the informal, unorganized poor, but to the traditional, patron-client and rural based “peripheral” coalitions - or the “structural poor” as well. In the countryside, decentralized SSNs, municipal reforms and NGOs served to redirect and contain rural demand making within co-optative and individualist modes of participation.

At the same time, these programs provided desperately needed food and resources to a civil society unable to maintain a constant capacity for mobilization or protest that it had invested in bringing down the region’s military regimes. Whether through co-optation or self-interest, these ameliorative programs found deep support across an increasingly uprooted, informally employed and politically uncommitted population.

The tension between growth and distribution generated by the demise of developmentalism was no more visible than in Central America. Due to the small size of their internal markets, Central America was limited to a much shorter, less intense process of developmentalism. Despite brief populist interludes in the early post-World War II period, intransigent agrarian elites and U.S. Cold War politics condemned El Salvador, and much of Central America to a development model of “reactionary despotism,” preserving extreme inequality and suppressing or co-opting all working class activity (Baloyra 1983). A balance between the state and agrarian interests in Costa Rica and Honduras, led to more democratic regimes, with greater tolerance of labor – the former through extension of welfare and the latter through redistribution of land.

Central American states came late to the policies of ISI, and pursued a hybrid model emphasizing the intensification and diversification of the export of primary products. The approach paid off early on (1944-1954) due to favorable prices in coffee and cotton, but the decline in terms of trade brought the first fiscal crisis in the late 1950s. External investment through the Alliance for Progress and growing intra-regional trade stimulated by the formation of a common market fed a new wave of high economic growth. However, export-led growth also came with increasing inflation, causing real wages to fall during the 1970s.¹¹⁶

El Salvador, like its neighbors, was unable to avoid the foreign exchange bottleneck. It imported more capital goods than it sold in terms of intermediate consumer products to a stagnant domestic market and thin regional market. A weak attempt at ISI was made in El Salvador by the military regimes of the 1960s and 1970s. A mild land reform was announced with the combined goals of accommodating an increasingly assertive and numerically menacing peasantry and to modernize agriculture.¹¹⁷ Surplus foreign exchange generated by agro-exports was to be redirected toward investment in urban industrialization and rural agro-processing. Yet, even this modest effort failed to consolidate a manufacturing base and in turn catalyze a modernizing industrial elite from the unified ranks of landed agro-export class in El Salvador.¹¹⁸ The agrarian oligarchy blocked the primary goal of inducing a late, but rapid industrialization. El Salvador's inability to absorb surplus labor forced migration to neighboring Honduras.¹¹⁹ Perceptions of scarcity in both countries sparked a war in 1969 prior during which Honduras expelled as many as 100,000 Salvadoran migrant workers. The Central American Common Market and El Salvador's export-led industrialization hopes collapsed soon afterward.

¹¹⁶ Bulmer-Thomas notes that this wage decline was reversed only in Costa Rica and Honduras, the two Central American countries with the strongest trade unions. (1987: 219).

¹¹⁷ Underutilization of land was a principal concern, as El Salvador had already achieved one of the highest yields in the world for coffee and cotton by the 1950s (Bulmer-Thomas, 1987: 154)

¹¹⁸ See Bulmer-Thomas (1987: 150-229). CEPAL (1978) estimates that manufacturing share in the Salvadoran GDP grew from 12.9 % in 1950 to 17.6% in 1970, but then dropped slightly to 17.5% of GDP in 1979. Gains in employment were even less impressive. Mena (1979) notes that of the 42 major industrial ventures launched prior to 1960, 25 were held by groups of coffee growers. This diversification nevertheless failed to divide the coffee oligarchy between modern and traditional factions.

¹¹⁹ Despite over 8% growth in manufacturing output during the 1960s, the proportion of industrial workers in the total labor force actually declined from 13.1% in 1960 to 11.1% in 1970 (CEPAL 1980: 18).

National capitalist policies of ISI were not reformed but instead were adapted to Central America's dramatic structure of land and income inequality. In El Salvador, agriculture employed over 50% of the economically active population in 1970. Yet, land distribution was one of the most unequal in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.82.¹²⁰ Due to a weak internal market, the expansion of export quotas to the U.S., and the strength of entrenched local elites, national capitalism emerged heavily reliant upon primary products. The profitability of tropical commodities in Central America, such as coffee, sugar, bananas, cotton and beef, crowded out investment in traditional industrialization efforts such as those underway in the larger economies of Latin America. With the possible exception of Costa Rica, the Central American model developed the traits of a weak, but centralized state (under the tutelage of successive military governments), a well organized and increasingly diversified agro-export based elite, extreme inequality in land distribution, and increasing dependence on U.S. support and markets.

The crisis in this model came not from debt, (again, with the possible exception of Costa Rica) but from political turmoil stemming from protests of entrenched inequality. The distributional dynamics of the Central American agro-export model that Durham (1979) has shown to explain the 1969 war between Honduras and El Salvador, eventually led to full scale peasant rebellion and civil war in three of the five countries. More so than in the rest of Latin America, decentralized institutions emerged in Central America as instruments of insurgent and counterinsurgent political strategies, only to later assume development responsibilities.

The significance of the Salvadoran case lies in the relatively equal penetration of bottom-up conceptions of decentralization in as much as third of the country. The FMLN mobilized rural actors for over two decades, ultimately eroding the rural material base of landlord hegemony within the reactionary ruling alliance and setting in motion a process of economic, political and social transformation at the local level. Traditional agrarian relations were disrupted by contentious strategies for the redistribution of land and power. Decentralization of governance in zones under insurgent control devolved unprecedented authority to poor community leaders.

International organizations backed both insurgent and counter-insurgent forces in a variety of ways: facilitating the coordination of confrontational protests, providing sanctuary for refugees and channeling substantial material resources to civilian populations and belligerent

¹²⁰ Estimated from DIGESTYC Censo Agropecuario (1974).

forces on either side. Transnational solidarity movements played a significant role in advocating local self-rule in liberated territory as a means of strengthening the human rights of civilian non-combatants but also to contest state authority in areas of insurgent control.¹²¹

As the main supporter of the counter-insurgent effort, USAID coordinated “democracy aid” to the Salvadoran Christian Democrats and then to ARENA to compensate for constant economic crises and offset the threat of insurgent influence. Democracy building in El Salvador was a top-down process. Decentralization began through military civic action programs, which required the revival of municipal authority. Through a selective recruitment of individuals and groups to participate in training scholarships, local institution building programs and through provision of indirect electoral support for acceptable opposition parties, “democracy aid” sought to commit any new ruling elite to minimalist and gradualist democratic goals (Carothers 1999; Robinson 2000). One recent study of U.S. democracy aid finds that it has been “inevitably political,” having promoted “an artificially narrow conception of civil society – focused on Western-style advocacy NGOs – at the expense of other organizational forms” (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). The capacity of the FMLN to effectively challenge counter-insurgent democratization transformed the coercive capacity of traditional (agrarian) elites to control the ruling coalition and therefore placed the entire electoral formula in jeopardy forcing its reformulation.

In sum, a fifty year experiment in Latin American developmentalism was on the brink of collapse by the early 1980s. To understand why this critical moment in Latin American development produced decentralization as a model for success in areas where the developmental state had failed, it is important to underscore what the model had achieved and what it had not. Its principal achievement of relatively autonomous high growth with political stability proved insufficient to alter the region’s reliance on volatile global primary goods markets or its highly skewed distributional outcomes. A modernizing industrial class failed to break the bonds of dependence on local landlords or foreign investors. In El Salvador, the short-lived and ultimately failed effort to effectively industrialize closed the only possible alternative to massive land redistribution for preventing armed revolution. In sum, developmentalism represented a

¹²¹ These networks have also orchestrated international campaigns in favor of human rights, labor rights, gender and ethnic freedoms.

weak welfare model that failed to deepen the responsibility held by either the state or society for the region's poor or to close the gap between the North and South.

Unable to fix deep fiscal imbalances, the reactionary ruling alliance of agrarian and modernizing elites, the state and foreign investors now faced two threats. From above, IFI and creditor demands for fundamental restructuring of the state and the integration of the national economy into a globalizing capitalist system signified a steep erosion of local autonomy. From below, increasingly violent demands for political and economic equity threatened the entire franchise of elite-led development. In both, we find the wellsprings of the mass movements and elite pacts for democracy that brought the demise of authoritarian regimes and opened the door for decentralization programs through the course of the 1980s. In the former, we find the makings of a new pact between agrarian and modernizing elites that acceded to decentralization as a means of safeguarding the crumbling political power of a single ruling coalition. In the latter, we find the structuralist and post-developmental mobilization networks that have seized decentralizing reforms as a way of resisting neoliberalism and globalization. These top-down and bottom-up movements have structured the support for decentralization.

B. LATIN AMERICAN DECENTRALIZATION: MUNICIPALITIES, NGOS AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS¹²²

This section examines the trends in political and fiscal decentralization and the three principal institutional innovations: municipal government, NGOs and social safety nets. Given the theoretical benefits of fiscal federalism and participatory development upon which the emergence of local development institutions is grounded, a central question to be explored here is whether local institutional performance has met expectations.

¹²² Cases of decentralization in Latin America can be sub-divided between countries with federal (Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil) and two-tier political structures. This chapter focuses on the latter political structure.

1. Municipalism

Evidence of a local transition in Latin America is illustrated by the political and fiscal decentralization reforms in Latin America summarized in Tables E.1 and E.2 in Appendix. Table E.1 synthesizes the political dimension of decentralization reforms, placing El Salvador in a regional perspective. Direct elections for mayor now occur in nearly all Latin American and Caribbean countries, as competitive elections were re-established in the early 1980s. Latin American countries differ in their respective political structures. Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico are federal systems, with three functioning tiers of government and elected state governors. For unitary systems, which include El Salvador, Chile, Bolivia, Costa Rica and other smaller countries, intermediate states or departments have a much less independent role. Regional or provincial governors are appointed by the executive. In at least seven countries (including El Salvador) the executive reserves the legal right to override decisions made by local government, also setting a substantive limit to the autonomy of municipal government. Thus despite political decentralization, the executive retains significant decision-making power over local government in both the political and administrative realms of decentralized authority.¹²³ Part of this authority derives from local spending in the form of SSNs (last three columns of Table E.1)

The fiscal autonomy of municipal government is addressed in Table E.2. In general, the level of total revenue collection and total government expenditure that happens at the local (state and municipal) level has increased since the 1980s. For Central America, the share of total government revenue varies between 2.9% in Costa Rica and 9.4% Nicaragua. The local share of total government expenditures in Central America ranges from 3.4% in Costa Rica to 12.3% in Honduras. On both accounts, Central American municipalities continue to play a very modest role in total finance administration, but that expenditure responsibilities have tended to outpace revenue increases.

¹²³ Local duties where Latin American central governments continue to have some authority include hiring and firing of local employees, contracting out services, and constitutional safeguards against arbitrary dismissal of local government.

In almost all Latin American and Caribbean countries, the revenue base of local governments has increased in the last decade. The resource base is typically a mix of fixed or formulaic transfers from the central government, locally generated revenues from taxes and user fees, and the capacity to incur debt. There is considerable variation in the national budget assigned to local government, with Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia sharing more than 20% of total government expenditures with the municipalities, and Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama and Paraguay sharing less than 3%.

Locally generated revenues are generally limited to those most appropriately administered by sub-national governments, including vehicle or business license tax, user fees for various services, and in a few cases, a property tax.¹²⁴ All local governments in Latin America, with the possible exception of the largest cities, are dependent on revenue sharing contracts with the central government. The World Bank refers to this level of dependency as **vertical imbalance**-- or the degree to which sub-national governments rely on central government revenues to support their expenditures. Vertical imbalance is measured by intergovernmental transfers as a share of sub-national expenditures.¹²⁵ Here too, there is considerable variation. Dependence on inter-governmental transfers is highest in federal systems, but also several small unitary governments (El Salvador, Honduras and Bolivia). However, Chile, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic all report less than 10% dependence on state transfers. In small countries, local taxes are of greater significance to the local revenue base, which usually means that local revenues are quite low.¹²⁶

It is worth noting that local control over tax rates, tax bases, local services, territorial planning, procurement, borrowing and establishing conditions for inter-governmental transfers in most developing countries is the exception rather than the norm. Shah and Thompson (2004)

¹²⁴ Income taxes (personal and corporate), import duties, and value added (or sales) taxes are typically administered by the central government - the only level of government, in theory, capable of uniform and universal coverage. Such revenues are then redistributed to lower levels of government through transfers. See Musgrave (1983) and Shah (1994)

¹²⁵ See World Bank Decentralization and Sub-national Economic Governance program. <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/fiscalindicators.htm>, accessed November, 2005. This measure for vertical imbalance does not distinguish what proportion of transfers is conditional versus general purpose, and the GFS data do not provide this information.

¹²⁶ Shah (2004: 9) estimates that sub-national own revenues as a percent of GDP represent only 5.5% of GDP in a sample of developing countries.

point out that in Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, despite increased transfers of resources and authority, the central government retains a varying capacity to intervene in the administration of property taxes. In part due to the meddling of corruptible central government agents in the administration of property taxes, the overall collection as a ratio of GDP and total tax revenue remains surprisingly low.¹²⁷ By comparison, transfers represent a significantly higher and growing share.¹²⁸

Another stream of local finance that reflects centralized state control but a deconcentration of resources and a delegation of responsibilities are the social safety net programs. The size of many of these SSN programs often exceeds that resources transferred to local governments directly from the state.

What are some of the arguments upon which municipalities have become relegitimized? By enfranchising local government, decentralization is expected to increase inter-party political competition, intra-party competition, and finally, competition between separate levels of government. In theory, all three types of competition are supposed to make political institutions perform more efficiently and effectively (Ferejohn and Weingast 1997). Decentralization is also associated with the town meeting virtues of localized democracy inherited from Tocqueville, which suggests that “smaller is better.” (Dahl and Tufte 1973). In addition to the improvement in representation suggested by heightened party competition, decentralization strengthens democratic local governance by improving civic competence, enhancing the accountability and responsiveness to local interests, and constituting a means for checking centralized power (Diamond 1999: 119-122). Putnam’s (1993) research on Italian regions makes one of the strongest claims that through the construction of horizontal ties among citizens (one conception of social capital) and increased access to legislators (political capital) decentralization closes the virtuous circle that links associational activism with economic development.

In the area of fiscal politics, decentralization is frequently supported on the theoretical grounds of solving the “aggregation problem” - that is, when states deliver uniform public services that fail to meet diverse local needs. Theories of fiscal federalism argue that delegation

¹²⁷ Bahl (2001) estimates that property tax revenues represent 0.42% of GDP and about 2% of total tax revenue in developing countries.

¹²⁸ Shah (2004). In 1997, transfers represented 42% of total sub-national revenues (includes states of federal systems, and would be higher for only municipal governments).

of decision-making power to sub-national levels of government can increase the efficiency of governance by allowing matching public service delivery with local preferences (Stein 1997). “Local consumers, confronted with the costs of alternative levels of service, will reveal their preferences by voting for rival political candidates or moving to other jurisdictions.” (Burki, Perry and Dillinger 1999: 21).

The effect of decentralization on the size of government is the subject of at least two competing theories. Brennan and Buchanan (1980) argue that, as an unregulated monopoly, the state is not subject to competitive pressures and therefore tends to grow in order to expand rent seeking opportunities or solve efficiency problems. Decentralization increases popular control over politically motivated incentives to expand the public sector, thereby reducing the overall size of government expenditures. Oates (1985) contends that decentralization leads to a closer fit between local preferences and government response, thereby generating greater willingness to entrust local government with more tax resources. Decentralization, according to this view, results in larger government. Both arguments are predicated on an active civic capacity, competitive local political structures, and the freedom of mobility as effective sanctions against poor local governance - all assumptions that are questionable for parts of Latin America. While recent research on Latin America has provided support for both arguments, it should be clear they share a common dependence on local politics to effectively transmit individual preferences (Oates 1972).

In practice, the efficiency payoffs of decentralization have been slow in coming in Latin America, although it might be argued that it is too soon to tell Remmer (1993). Centralized political party systems have often controlled both the revenue source and the expenditure menu of decentralization programs, allowing substantial political manipulation of the allocation process. Moreover, many decentralization reforms (especially social safety net programs) have actually increased the autonomy of the executive by providing a discretionary budget independent of traditional party hierarchy (Dresser 1991). This executive discretion has not always favored the consolidation of democratic gains. Willis, Garman and Haggard (1999) argue that decentralization has advanced farther in countries where the party structure is more decentralized and disciplined, which therefore enhances the bargaining capacity of locally elected party leaders. Conversely, research by Stein, Talvi and Grisanti (1997) find that fiscal policy is heavily influenced by electoral cycles in Latin America, and that fragmented party

systems common to Latin American politics tend to exacerbate the very fiscal soundness on which local resources depend.

Perhaps anticipating these political obstacles, proponents of fiscal federalism have emphasized several conditions for decentralization success. First, to enjoy the benefits of decentralization, municipalities must approach economies of scale. Many municipalities are simply too small to handle the required administrative responsibilities and a rational consolidation is needed. The average Salvadoran municipal population is about 23,000, which is typical for Latin America but larger than municipalities in many European countries.¹²⁹ However the mean municipal population obscures the skewed distribution of municipalities, where a few large cities (such as San Salvador with a population of 1,000,000) dwarf the vast majority of towns (over two thirds) have less than 10,000 people. Some Salvadoran municipal governments represent fewer than 1,000 people.

A second related concern is the steep learning curve for most mayors in countries where political decentralization has only recently been introduced. The deficit in human capital and budgeting skills clearly impact effective administration of local resources. Unspoken is the attribution of weakness of mayors as an effective lobby to these same deficits.

Third, studies of decentralization have emphasized the importance of the autonomy that local government potentially acquires in attempting to balance new responsibilities with resources. Clearly, the principal bargaining point between local, national and international actors is over the size and composition of local revenues and spending rules. The property tax is widely considered to represent the most appropriate local instrument to strengthen municipal fiscal autonomy, but as Bird (1992) and others have noted, poor cadastral lists and weak collection enforcement capacity inhibit effective tax collection. Central government transfers are limited by Latin America's general reliance on indirect expenditure based taxes which are substantially more volatile than direct income based taxes, and have produced one of the world's lowest tax bases.¹³⁰ Furthermore, excessive municipal budget dependence on central government transfers

¹²⁹ European municipal size varies from extremely large municipalities in Britain and Ireland (average size, respectively, 120,000 and 103,000) and rather small municipalities in France, Spain and Italy (average size, respectively, 1,600, 4,800, and 7,200). Scandinavian municipalities are in the middle, with Denmark (18,000), Norway (9,000), Finland (10,900), and Sweden (30,200). Mouritzen (1999) cited in Larson (2002).

¹³⁰ Volatility is defined as greater than average fluctuations (the degree of standard deviation) from year to year in the fiscal balance. For example, Gavin and Hausmann (1998: 41) argue that the typical change in the fiscal balance as a percent of GDP in Latin America has been about 2-3 times that of industrialized economies. Moreover, fiscal

can discourage local revenue generation and does not necessarily encourage citizen vigilance of local government efficiency because locals don't see transferred indirect taxes as "their money" (Peterson 1997: 9).

Fourth, solving the aggregation problem introduces a coordination problem of pooling the efforts of a wider array of governmental and non-governmental actors. Unless clear functional responsibilities are established between separate levels of government, duplication and incentives to "free ride" threaten to undermine the potential efficiency gains of decentralization.¹³¹ Indeed, as some NGOs have amassed considerable budgets and social safety net programs have been transformed into line ministries in charge of local development, their status as brokers between communities and the state or international funding sources has led to coordination problems, and conflict with local governments, private sector interests and party elites over control of local patronage networks.

Although the theory of decentralization is rooted in the bottom-up behaviors of voters that organize or move to find the optimal mix of taxes and services, the evaluation criteria for decentralization that has dominated the discussion to this point reflects a top-down blueprint drawn up by the international financial institutions (IFIs) and national elites. The overriding concerns of the IFIs are growth, fiscal discipline, resource allocation efficiency of service delivery, and the largely endogenous political obstacles to achieving both. Decentralization is guided by an empowerment by invitation approach that enlists citizen participation only to the extent that the prioritized reform agenda is advanced. However, national elites are often less interested in the Tiebout objectives of improving the efficiency, equity or downward accountability of local governance, than in short run political and bureaucratic advantages that might be won through the redistribution of state assets (Shah 2004: 21). It is no surprise then that decentralization has advanced in Latin America where the mutual interests for a stable transition between state managers, local capital and IFI program officials have converged.

By contrast, the evidence that decentralization reforms have resulted in Latin America from popular bottom up demands for more efficient state governance is sketchy at best. We

volatility has been compounded by its procyclical character (spending more in good times, less in bad times), both of which produce a "stop and go" pattern of public spending.

¹³¹ A growing IFI concern with the "sustainability" of projects has focused on the lack of state or local commitment to the maintenance and operations costs that dramatically shorten a project's lifespan.

know that fifteen years of decentralization reforms, which now constitute nearly a third of the World Bank's lending portfolio, have done little to alter the world's highest levels of inequality and embedded poverty.¹³² Notably absent from the IFI criteria for decentralization performance are the mechanisms that disable political capture by ensuring the capacity to overcome collective action problems and contest prevailing inequality.

2. Social Safety Nets

While mayors and city councils have been the direct beneficiary of decentralization reforms, a second quasi-local development institution that has emerged from the top-down is the ubiquitous social safety net program (also referred to as social investment funds). Between 1980 and 2000, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, together, have spent a total of more than \$2.6 billion on social safety net programs in Latin America and Africa. European donors have invested another \$1.3 billion (Jorgensen 2000). At their inception, social safety net programs were designed to fill recession-induced holes in the social welfare system that emerged as a direct result of structural adjustment reforms. These programs provided assistance to the new poor, while the old poor, which included most of the rural sector, were viewed as a long-term consequence of inherent distortions in the reformed institutions.¹³³ Economic growth was expected to resolve the second type of poverty.¹³⁴ As one World Bank study at the time optimistically suggested, "Not only can the adverse impact on the poor be reduced at little cost to

¹³² Ferranti, et al. (2003) compile an impressive description of the state of inequality in Latin America that is equally notable for the absence of meaningful corrective policy proposals or a rigorous assessment of how past Bank policies have facilitated this outcome. The socialization of beneficiaries in the virtues and skills of democratic governance that are typically recommended by paternalistic IFI civic renewal schemes has rarely been sufficient to alter the structural barriers to development erected by exclusionary and corrupt elites. Thus, it is not without ample evidence that IFIs continue to ignore how deeply rooted enclaves of inequality are highly resistant to any reform.

¹³³ That is, the old, structural poor existed prior to the debt crisis and subsequent adjustment policies. While safety net programs employed different targeting criteria, most attempted, more or less successfully, to initially address the needs of the "new poor" but eventually to reach the very poorest of the entire population.

¹³⁴ Allocative efficiency is seen as the organizing principle of structural adjustment reforms - meaning the reduction of price distortions and economic rents caused by ineffective state intervention. Rapid and sustained growth is supposed to follow. However the success of the East Asian countries in achieving this goal by "getting prices wrong" (Amsden 1994) has challenged this extreme faith in the market logic. See World Bank (1993) for market interpretation of East Asian success and Wade (1996) for critique.

the adjustment program, but opportunities can be created during the adjustment process for stronger poverty reduction in the future." (Ribe, et al. 1990: 1)

Funded largely by external lending institutions, these social investment programs targeted the poorest, but were intended as short-term, transitional measures to provide emergency employment and cushion the temporary decline in income, employment and services that resulted from the reform process. Social safety net programs originated from the realization that structural adjustment would be slower and more difficult than initially expected. Lifting a slogan from a report highly critical of structural adjustment, SSN programs came to be characterized as disguising adjustment with "a human face"¹³⁵

The persistence of poverty expanded the primary focus of SSNs to attack the problem of the "old" structural poverty in rural areas. SSNs have since come to be viewed as a permanent alternative form of delivering social services and small scale public works projects to rural and high poverty areas. This policy solution prided itself for the avoidance of institutional corruption, relatively better trained staff and overcoming the political resistance to decentralization characteristic of line ministry personnel. Social safety net programs surmounted these factors by designing privatized and targeted anti-poverty programs to reach the poorest and to secure minimal autonomy from established political institutions. Aiming at correcting the argued inefficiencies of centralization and overzealous planning for which the state was blamed, SSNs were intended to coordinate delivery of relief services through local government, and to a lesser extent, NGOs and community level grassroots organizations.

SSNs are touted as "demand-driven" to the extent that grant funds are provided for communities to choose among a pre-established menu of projects. They are decentralized to the extent that project design, construction and maintenance involve or are the full responsibility of local governments, NGOs, private firms and community groups - the latter of which are often required to make a matching donation of labor or resources. SSNs are organized, at least at the outset, as semi-autonomous agencies operating parallel to line ministries and often directly accountable to the country's executive and the institution's international donors. Finally, SSN staff are considered to be superior to and are often compensated higher than peers in the public sector workforce in terms of experience and professionalism - in part due to the incentives and

¹³⁵ Ribe, et al. (1990), accommodating the slogan used by Cornia, et al. (1987).

sanctions imposed by international donors. For these reasons, SSNs are widely held to represent improvements over the centralized “supply-driven” (read populist) programs of central governments (Tendler 1999: 8).

Eighteen social safety net programs are operating in Latin America, half of which are funded by both the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. SSNs in Latin America have focused on creating employment, developing infrastructure, delivering social services rapidly, at lower cost and more effectively than central governments, and strengthening local institutions in areas identified by poverty maps as the most poor. One IDB review of SSNs concluded:

Latin American governments, as presently constituted, have few agencies through which to channel resources. Most government benefits go to better off communities. Social investment funds can be thought of as an attempt to correct this bias albeit mainly with foreign resources. They represent a Latin American *social invention* that has been replicated worldwide: a government institution whose fundamental objective is poverty reduction and which complements other government programs and policies to help the poor. They are a response to a permanent problem and as such have come to represent an important part of the attempt to improve equity in Latin American societies. Given the seriousness of the poverty problem, there is ample justification to transform the funds from temporary to permanent instruments of government. (Goodman, Morley, Siri, and Zuckerman 1997: 64, italics added)

However, another study summarizing the findings of IFI internal analyses of internationally funded SSN programs is decidedly less optimistic regarding their impact. Tendler concludes that program performance was well below expectations and often inferior in many areas to prior supply-driven government programs. The evidence in terms of employment and wages, poverty reduction, reaching the poorest, rapid disbursement, flexibility, lower service costs - all stated objectives of the SSNs, does not support the overwhelmingly positive portrayals of SSNs as successful policy innovations. This evidence is often the same as that used to justify the extension of consolidation of SSNs as a model for permanently serving a country's poorest people. Despite the difficulties of comparing SSNs with non demand-driven programs, the Banks' own data suggests that the programs studied were clearly not superior and poor or non-existent monitoring and evaluation made it impossible to determine whether SSNs actually made a difference in improving the availability or quality of basic services in poor and rural communities (IDB 1997: 68). In the words of another analyst, the evaluated programs could not be proven to be “effective safety nets in any significant scale.” (Lustig 1995: 2-4)

Tendler points out the irony that the very recommendations to fix the SSN programs (greater expenditure on planning and regional presence) move them in the direction of supply-driven centralized agencies that SSNs were designed to replace. In this sense, the semi-privatized nature of SSNs may be understood as the opposite of decentralization. In practice, “they are run by central-government agencies, either newly created or newly empowered by their association with international donors and with strong support from the country’s president. In the majority of cases, moreover, they do not devolve power and responsibilities to local governments; when they do, this usually does not happen as part of a larger [decentralizing] reform, ... sometimes even works at cross purposes to such reforms” (1999: 10).

SSN spending has been associated with electoral patterns, often responding to the political threat of emerging opposition parties or social movements.¹³⁶ Tendler argues that SSNs may be more accurately described as a deconcentration of supply-driven service provision to more trusted interlocutors between the local population and national leaders. Given the lack of results, the IFIs are now rethinking their promotion of SSNs, but have had little success in dismantling what have now become entrenched and permanent bureaucracies.¹³⁷ We are left with the question of how the making of SSNs permanent will not detract from the larger task of reforming existing line ministries.

3. Civil society and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

A third local institution has emerged from below to challenge the exclusionary nature of elite crafted alternatives to the developmental state. The recent proliferation of NGOs in Latin America can be traced to the same social terrain that gave rise to structural adjustment, social safety nets and decentralization (Stewart 1995; Graham 1992, 1994). The repression directed

¹³⁶ Perhaps the two most well documented cases of SSNs serving as political patronage are that of PRONOSAL in Mexico and FONCODES in Peru (Cornelius, 1994; Schady, 2000; Graham and Kane, 1998). These studies generally show spikes in SSN spending prior to elections, exclusion of politically relevant opposition communities, although these cause-effect linkages have been shown to be mediated by the structure of local politics (Ames, 1995).

¹³⁷ The most recent version of the SSN approach are cash transfer programs. In search of a new panacea, replications of the *Oportunidades* Program in Mexico and *Bolsa Escola* in Brazil are being rapidly spun off with ready IFI funding in other Latin American countries.

against public universities as hotbeds of student protest in the 1970s, followed by downsizing of public employment during the 1980s, displaced many middle class, highly educated professionals, often those associated with political opposition to the ruling party (Levy 1995). NGOs have served as a refuge for this class of Latin American intellectuals and development practitioners who formed research, advocacy and service organizations that were often openly critical of structural adjustment and lobbied for the rights of the politically excluded.

In reaction to their role as a catalyst for greater transparency, participation and accountability in democratic institutions, NGOs have traditionally been viewed by national governments in Latin America with what ranges from indifference to hostility. Largely associated with leftist opposition movements, service provider NGOs were integrated into social safety net programs and as partners in decentralization programs only with great initial reluctance. Perceived as opponents of structural adjustment, relations between NGOs and governing elites have been fraught with mutual suspicion.

However, these monolithic classifications obscure substantial variability among NGOs as the unitary expression of civil society in Latin America. A more useful typology recognizes both horizontal and vertical diversity among NGOs and other civil society organizations. First, NGOs are simply one type of civil society organization, co-existing with unions, civic groups, cooperatives, charity agencies, the private sector, informal associations and networks.¹³⁸ These organizations are typically non-profits, humanitarian oriented, and differ in terms of governance structure (representation, board of directors, etc.). While many if not most NGOs find their origins as social movement actors, there exists a significant ideological diversity among the NGOs. Some of the most influential NGOs are professional and commercial trade associations as guilds historically linked to groups on the political right (e.g. the FUSADES family of NGOs in El Salvador). On a second vertical axis, some local NGOs are based in host countries, while larger international donor INGOs operate through networks that encompass horizontal and vertical linkages between international headquarters and branch offices in Northern countries and

¹³⁸ For this reason, some prefer the label “civil society organization” or CSO, which captures any formal or informal group in a particular country. Fisher (1998) uses the terms, Grassroots Organization (GRO) and Grassroots Support Organization (GRSO) to differentiate between local, member based groups and regional, service organizations. My use of NGOs is consistent with Fisher’s GRSO, while I use *gremio* or CSO (civil society organization), interchangeably to refer to local, member-based organizations. The U.S. vernacular is private voluntary organizations (PVO), which for this research, often coincides with international donor agencies, or INGOs.

satellite offices in the South (CARE, World Vision, Oxfam). Third, at all levels, political diversity among NGOs is increasing. This study looks at the entire local institutional field of development actors, but focuses in most detail on Salvadoran NGOs.

This rise of NGOs has renewed interest in the benefits of an assertive, autonomous civil society as a basic condition for transforming structural inequality (Cernea 1988; Keane 1988, 1990; Carroll 1992; Arato and Cohen 1992). For much of the 1990s, the virtues of NGOs were widely acclaimed. NGOs have been credited with providing more cost effective, innovative, and customized services to the poorest social sectors, in stark contrast to the overburdened, over-bureaucratized and clientelist state sectors (Fowler 1990; Korten 1991). By the same token, NGOs are endowed with useful political capacities. NGOs are described as "supercitizens", serving as the inspiration for broad-based civic action (Reilly 1995). It is this civic-ness that Putnam (1993), among others have identified as social capital, or the bedrock of democratic norms, trust and horizontal networks that underwrite governmental accountability. NGOs advocate directly on behalf of beneficiaries but also empower communities and their grassroots organizations to exercise influence on policy decision making processes independent of other political actors, including the NGOs themselves (Sen 1982; Elliott 1987; Diaz-Albertini 1990; UNDP 1993).

Has the proliferation of NGOs increased non-elite bargaining capacity? Despite their noted virtues, empirical research has failed to demonstrate the superior effectiveness of NGO performance on the basis of having mitigated the wider socio-economic trends toward growing inequality that persist in Latin America. Tandler (1987) questions the "articles of faith" about NGO capacity, debating the claim that NGO provision of services to the poor is cheaper than public provision. Edwards and Hulme (1992) argue that NGOs have had little impact on democratizing reforms. Indeed, some studies have strongly suggested that NGOs perform a stabilizing role that exacerbates the very problems they have set out to transform (Tandler 1981; Hancock 1989; Smith 1990; Korten 1991; Ferguson 1994; Arellano-López and Petras 1994; Carothers 1999: chapter 8).

Both critics and supporters of the NGO boom have now cautioned against viewing local actors as substitutes for the state in many areas of social policy. Despite the rise of NGOs and their best efforts to provide the poor with greater voice in government policy decision making, there is growing concern that the capacities of NGOs may be overstated. As one critical

observer of NGO experiences in Central America has argued, "the cards largely remain stacked against the poor, and NGOs seem to be able to do little to reshuffle the deck."¹³⁹ Others have gone farther to suggest that NGOs are no more virtuous than any other private interest embodied in civil society, and can just as likely degenerate into predation or venality as become a force for democratic development (Keane 1990; Foley 1996; Levi 1996).

Nevertheless, the association between NGOs and democracy in Latin America is a significant one, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. Comparing the total number of NGOs found in a country with its Freedom House Democracy Rating for 1995, there is a noticeable decline in the number of NGOs with improvements in a country's democracy rating ($Rsq. = 0.25$; Number of NGOs is significant $p < 0.05$). However, when the number of NGOs is divided by the country's total population, the linear pattern is no longer significant.

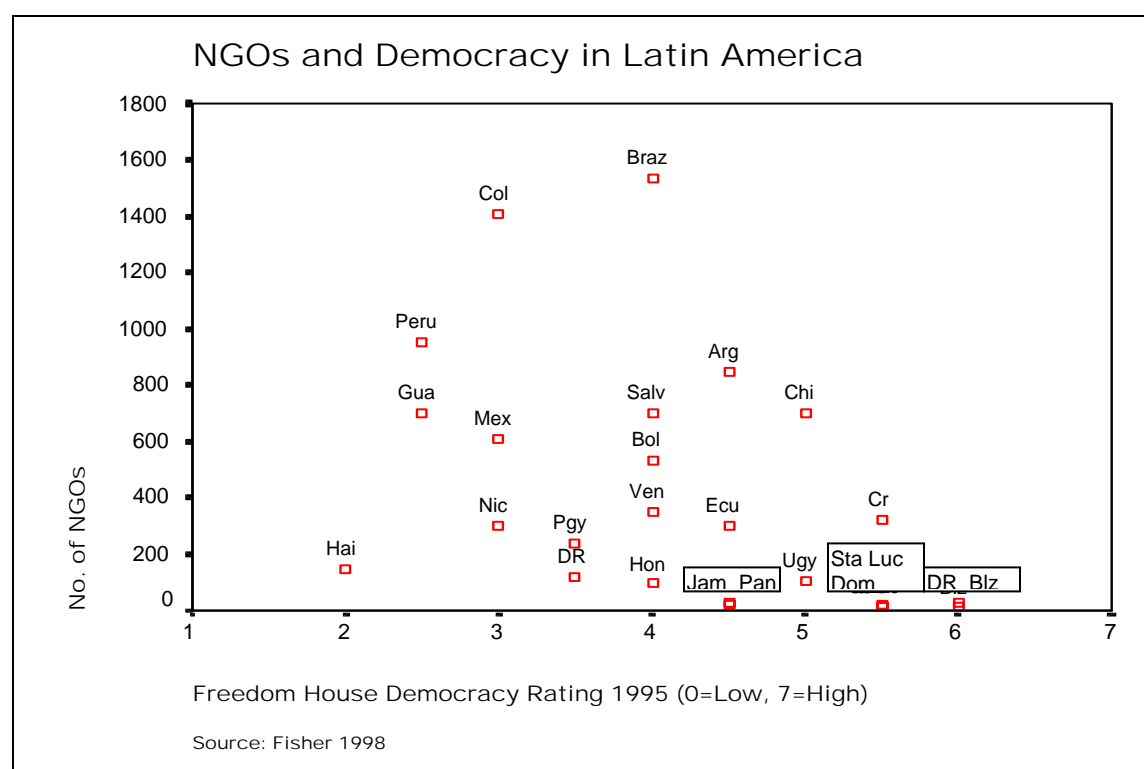


Figure 3.1 NGOs and Democracy in Latin America

¹³⁹ (MacDonald 1995). NGOs dedicated to development have grown tremendously both in OECD countries (by nearly 100% in the last 15 years) and in the developing world. Despite moderate improvements in certain human development indicators, the rise of NGO-led development has not halted the growing income gap between North and South, nor the absolute level of global poverty.

One might conclude that NGOs emerged in the most difficult, contentious stages of democratic reform and as institutions have achieved a certain level of democratic legitimacy, fewer NGOs are needed. In this view, NGOs might be viewed as a transitional actor, strengthening the link between state and civil society as democratic practices take root. However, the persistence of NGOs suggests two alternative hypothesis. One equally plausible explanation is that NGOs were never instrumental to the democratization of leading Latin American countries such as Costa Rica, Uruguay and prior to recent events, Venezuela. This is not to say these transitions were exclusively an elite affair. Rather, this second view suggests that the role of NGOs as catalysts of democratic development in Latin America is less than clear. A third hypothesis is that democracy itself might be the cause of NGO formation rather than the reverse.

Political pressure from below rather than empirically validated contributions have led the international lending community to recognize the importance of NGOs as promoters of grassroots participation. Using increasingly sophisticated strategies for publicizing the deficiencies and abuses of power in economic and political transitions, NGOs were successful for exposing injustices and supporting the poor peoples' campaigns for meaningful alternatives. The amplified voice of NGOs for greater participation, transparency, and accountability was facilitated by the discredited retreat of the Latin American state. Funding to NGOs spiked and despite their transitional origins, many were consolidated into permanent organizations.

In recognition of the power, ambition and capacity that NGOs had achieved, many have been recruited as partners with local government to provide a variety of local services through decentralization and social safety net programs. The privatization and deconcentration of health, education and agricultural extension services have relied on contracting NGOs to provide bare bones services to the more remote rural villages. Most of those contracted have accepted these service provider roles without questioning the comparative quality of the service, nor the restrictions placed on participating that typically prohibit increased consumer and citizen participation in the formulation of these policy reforms. Mass participation is limited to selective and non-binding consultation with segments of civil society through mechanisms that insert

international creditors and donors as critical interlocutors between society and national governments. Decentralization is shrouded in the mythical pre-condition of economic and political competition that steers citizens toward conventional, accommodative, and atomized self-help oriented modes of participation. In effect, decentralization can demobilize contentious, encompassing, rights oriented forms of association. Publicizing this empowerment by invitation strategy, the World Bank proudly announced that NGOs were partners on 40% of all Bank projects, although a subsequent study found this estimate highly overstated.¹⁴⁰

In light of the questionable mandate outlined above, the reliance on NGOs in the design and implementation of decentralized development programs deserves greater attention. The principal advantage of NGOs is that they represent an alternative path for channeling needed resources to the most vulnerable sectors of developing country populations. An argued limitation is the lack of organizational and technical capacity that inhibits most NGOs from scaling up beyond community level projects or providing highly technical services such as micro-finance (IDB 1997: 38). Many NGOs have only recently formed, possess limited resources, and are only slowly developing the technical expertise that is required to satisfy donor contract requirements. As with municipal officials, the architects of decentralization have only begun to address this limitation by strengthening NGOs and grassroots organizations along with local government.

Still, the capacity of the NGO sector should not be overstated. From the standpoint of NGO skeptics, it is by no means clear that scaling up micro-credit or food for work programs are preferential to state or private sector credit or investment. Such NGO programs may in fact act in cross purposes with scaling up state capacity or provided the appropriate incentives to the private sector. In their annual report linking human development with decentralized institutions, the UNDP concluded, “NGOs are unlikely to ever play more than a complementary role...their importance lies in making the point that poverty can be tackled, rather than tackling it to any large extent.” (1993: 98-99) As such, perhaps one of the most important NGO roles, although more controversial among many donors and governments, is to act as an alternative channel for the transmission of grassroots interests and claims upward. David Korten (1987) argues that

¹⁴⁰ Paul Nelson (1995). InterAction, the American Council for Voluntary Action - the largest U.S. based NGO member organization, reports that two thirds of PVO members rely on USAID funding for some part of their operating budget.

advocacy towards policy change is a key feature of maturing "third-generation stage" NGOs, or those organizations that have moved beyond relief or poverty program implementation functions to addressing structural change.¹⁴¹ The prevailing distrust of NGOs by governments in Latin America suggests reluctance in accepting this reciprocal conception of the NGO role as political advocate in decentralization and SSN programs, independent of political party control. Frequently, the invitation to participate in government or IFI funded programs comes with the implicit or explicit condition of political self-censorship - a noted compromise that many have criticized as abandoning the historic mission of advocacy for which NGOs were created (Foley and Edwards 1996).

Perhaps the most striking example of this tradeoff has been the truncated political form of association promoted by NGOs and their respective donors. Ties with labor unions, cooperatives, and other forms of workplace *gremios* (guilds), organized around some form of collective bargaining rights, are typically less common in the project portfolios of development NGOs.¹⁴² The strengthening of labor unions is remarkably absent in the IFI schema of empowering local actors.¹⁴³ As possibly the historically most political form of civil society advocacy in Latin America, unions have nearly disappeared from the development research agenda, despite their unquestionably central role in effective development. Public (and private) sector unions are viewed as centralized, parochial and corrupt opponents of reform, whose defense of benefits and protections have slowed privatization and fiscal reforms. Unions are therefore considered a fundamental justification for decentralizing key public services.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ By advocacy, I am referring to purposeful actions designed to bring about favorable change in people's lives. Advocacy activities can include information dissemination, training, lobbying, research, group formation, networking, dialogue, monitoring and protest. Advocacy outcomes can include media attention or public awareness of an issue, collective identity or shared control over some resource, resource mobilization, the opening of public space or policy change.

¹⁴² Gremios are organized primarily around economic or workplace concerns. Gremios are akin to guilds, typically composed of members defined by occupational status, whose primary objective is the promotion and defense of the economic interests of the group.

¹⁴³ Tandler (1997: 170, fn.21) points out that the World Bank's 1997 *World Development Report*, the only issue dedicated to the role of workers in reform, addresses labor unions in just one of its 18 chapters. This chapter weighs much more heavily on the special problems presented by labor rather than the contributions unions have and can make to development.

¹⁴⁴ This overwhelming bias against unions ignores a growing historical literature that redeems the role of the working class in transitions to democratic development in Latin America (Reuschmeyer, Stephens and Stephens, 1992; Middlebrook, 1995; R. Collier, 1999).

Downsizing has been the near universal recipe for reforming public sector and promoting investment, with almost no attention to how relations between workers, management, and consumers might be most effectively re-organized. Between 1985 and 1995, trade union density decreased in almost every Latin American country for which data are available.¹⁴⁵ As NGOs have proliferated alongside local government and social safety nets as the accepted forms of decentralized collective action, unionization and other contentious forms of mobilization (cooperatives, South-South encompassing coalitions) have been crowded out.

Despite claims by the IDB that the worst fears of privatization had not been realized, the Bank's own data show that by the late 1990s unemployment had reached record highs throughout Latin America and the informal sector sectors have exploded.¹⁴⁶ NGOs were eventually accepted by the IFIs as a more palatable mode of civil society organization, often delivering newly privatized services (health, education) not lucrative enough for private investors. In this sense, the rise of NGOs may have come at the direct expense of traditional forms of labor organization in terms of collective rights and workplace protections. Safely colonizing local demand making within the parochial bounds of NGO programs has undoubtedly provided greater policymaking leeway neoliberal reformers.

NGOs have also become catalysts for transnationalizing many advocacy campaigns. Keck and Sikkink (1998: 10) and Smith, et al. (1997) argue that INGOs engaged in transnational advocacy networks have increased steadily in many issue areas. NGOs and INGOs are well positioned to establish powerful North – South and South-South linkages to raise awareness and resources to hold national and international institutions more accountable.¹⁴⁷ However, the

¹⁴⁵ Trade union density is defined as union membership as a percentage of non-agricultural labor force. The most severe declines occurred in Argentina (-47.9%), Mexico (-42.7%), Venezuela (-42.5%), Costa Rica (-42.6%), Uruguay (-41.4%), Guatemala (-37.3%) and Colombia (-37.3%) - the latter two cases involving notable campaigns of anti-unionist terror. Trade union density in Chile rose during the same period by 37%, and fell in the U.S. by 15.2%. Data were not available for Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Panama, Nicaragua, and Honduras. World Labour Report, 1997-98.

¹⁴⁶ The IDB 2003 Report on Economic and Social Progress, which consulted closely with organized labor in the U.S. and Latin America and focuses on exclusively labor issues, does recognize the significance of unions but devotes most attention to promoting greater flexibility of labor markets and perseverance in neoliberal reforms as the solution to unemployment.

¹⁴⁷ Some of the more prominent transnational movements focus on human rights, environment, IFI reform, free trade and debt.

overall influence of transnational advocacy networks is ambiguous.¹⁴⁸ Some transnational networks assume the very hierarchical power relations and modest goals of the institutional targets that Southern partners are resisting. A great many humanitarian INGOs have employed transnational organizing in ways that are entirely consistent with and may even reinforce global poverty and inequality (Hancock 1989). One of the most significant and least understood transnational network involves international migration and remittances. Well established and sophisticated networks of coyotes, labor recruiters, predatory employers, churches, families and financial transfer systems as well as complicit policy makers on both ends of the circuit collaborate informally to perpetuate the lucrative enterprise of illegal migration that despite the toll in human suffering now accounts for over \$53 billion in Latin American investment (IDB 2006).

Finally, the role of NGOs can be better understood by examining the types of linkages that NGOs establish horizontally, (among other NGOs and other local institutions), and vertically (with the state or donor institutions above and constituents below). Critics of Putnam have argued that social capital cannot be explained merely by the density of local associational membership, but must evaluate the linkages between local and national groups, as well the political goals and range of coordination activities that these associational linkages entail (Skocpol, Ganz and Munson 2000; Crowley and Skocpol 2000; Foley and Edwards 1997, 1999). Dense horizontal linkages among intermediary organizations have been emphasized as the basis for both political and economic effectiveness (Esman and Uphoff 1984; Fisher 1993; Bratton 1990). State or donor vertical links with NGOs have received much less attention (Edwards and Hulme 1996, 1997). In practice, the efflorescence of NGOs without coordination leads to inefficiency, duplication and competition for target populations and scarce resources. Large numbers of NGOs ought to indicate a most viable civil society. Yet, as one study by Oxfam America concludes, the NGO sector in Latin America is fragmented, often highly politicized, and in many respects, given their numbers, spectacularly unable to advance a progressive social agenda (Renshaw 1994).

¹⁴⁸ See Nelson (1995, 2000), Fox and Brown (1998) and Mallaby (2004) for three quite different views of how effective transnational NGO movements have been in reforming unsavory IFI policies.

C. CONCLUSION

Decentralization is presented here as the reaction to the political opportunity triggered by the collapse of the Latin American developmentalist state in the early 1980s. This crisis set in motion a combination of political, social and economic realignments. The emergence of municipal government, SSNs and NGOs can be viewed as the product of strategic negotiation between stability oriented elite reformers from above and challenge oriented contentious movements from below.

Wracked by an unprecedented loss of legitimacy, hemmed in by the diffusion effect of global processes of democratization, and the hegemonic ascent of neoliberal structural adjustment, and strident demands for equity and participation by increasingly transnational social movements, Latin American elites had little choice but to decentralize state functions as a way of preserving their teetering economic and political systems. Given these constraints, ruling elites pushed down decentralization reforms from above to stabilize the peripheral electoral coalition as realignment occurred within the urban coalition.

Decentralization has emerged from the remarkable convergence of interests the ascending neoliberal faction and the descending traditional, agrarian faction of Latin American political leaders. Handpicked local actors have been invited to help implement decentralization programs that range from counter-insurgent civic action programs to anti-poverty complements of structural adjustment. Responding to the crisis of the developmentalist state, this reactionary alliance introduced social safety nets and revived local government with the objective of resisting contentious challenges from below.

Decentralization was also adopted as a de facto governance practice by insurgent and social movements as well as a political means for expediting the demise of corrupt, authoritarian governments. The emergence of NGOs is clearly associated with social movement opposition to authoritarian rule in Latin America that opened political space for decentralization. However, the effectiveness of NGOs in directly challenging top-down decentralization is much less clear due to their frequent acceptance of the established rules for political participation.

The dramatic local turn in development policy has also highlighted significant gaps between the theory and expected performance of local institutions. Local development actors have rushed in to fill the void left by a state weakened from structural adjustment reform. Several conditions for successful decentralization have been noted. Decentralization is expected to work where local governments are of adequate size, have acquired administrative skills and autonomy over local revenue generation, and rest upon a well-defined division of labor that provides the capacity to coordinate both horizontally (across NGOs, local governments) and vertically (upward with the line ministries of the state and downward with communities). These expectations for decentralization are often frustrated in the prevailing context of inequality and bureaucratic self-interest that decentralization was also intended to protect. Absent the necessary mechanisms against political capture, the emergence of NGOs, social safety nets and local government has effectively stabilized political support for neoliberal reforms.

These political and economic realignments associated with decentralization have increased the political space for local actors, but have they empowered local actors? It is toward answering this question that I trace in the next two chapters the origins and performance of NGOs, local government and social safety nets in the opportunity structure and action choices that contributed to civil war in El Salvador?

IV. CHAPTER FOUR: DECENTRALIZATION FROM BELOW I – THE PRE-WAR INSURGENT AND COUNTER-INSURGENT EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES, 1961-1980

A. INTRODUCTION

Local institutional performance today has a great deal to do with choices people made in the recent past. In this chapter, I begin to trace the conflictive and consensual origins of the local institutions that emerged in post-war El Salvador and their effectiveness in tackling the many challenges of reconstruction. These local actors emerged as key post-war interlocutors between communities and the state and international donors. As argued in the previous chapter, the apparent consensus behind a push to decentralize post-war development was shaped by a decade's long clash of challenging (insurgent) and stabilizing (counter-insurgent) forces. Decentralization before the war consisted of de facto rule by local landlords whose influence grew with the export boom that began in the 1950s and endured through several crises until the civil war began in 1980. This period of agrarian modernization not only altered the rural landscape, but generated social tensions that ultimately transformed local politics and institutions. This chapter unpacks the process of agrarian modernization and the related economic, social and political reactions it caused in my case study region of analysis.

Choices made during this period set communities on one of three possible paths – revolution, reform or reactionary counter-insurgent defense of agrarian inequality. History is, therefore, subject to the competing interpretive frames. Where the iron grip of the landholding elite and reactionary clergy mobilized local communities to resist the ideology of revolution espoused by the FMLN, local politics remains very much as it was three to four decades ago – safely regulated by the self-serving veto power of a small network of wealthy *terratenientes*. As in my counter-insurgent case study of the Jiboa Valley, history is articulated by the powerful few who view the revolutionary period as one of social decay. Restricted post-war local pluralism is

tolerated as an acceptable trade-off of the defeat of radical political challenges by leftist insurgent organizations. The resurgence of leftist politics of the past is viewed as a threat to the fragile democratic opportunities now available. Having chosen, voluntarily or not, to stabilize the dominant agrarian regime, local inhabitants of these regions are resigned to the consequences in a deepened climate of intimidation.

The survival, even dominance of the insurgent FMLN and the radical Christian Base Community experience on which it was built has had the opposite effect of leveling local inequalities and in turn, opening up the political opportunity structure to new contenders. Within leftist municipalities such as Tecoluca – my case study of insurgent influence, a framing of Salvadoran history views the civil war as a period of social transformation. The constructed political consensus for decentralization was dependent upon the dramatic effectiveness of insurgent movements to open democratic space and reduce the privilege of unaccountable elites. Rather than suppressing political and social conflict as a technical problem to be managed by rational elites, this insurgent framing validates conflictive processes as a source of democratic values and aspirations where institutions are weak or non-existent. Having effectively challenged a formidable adversary, insurgent communities demonstrate a vibrant and self-confident local political culture that continues to invent new ways of creatively confronting political and economic authoritarianism.

Where communities attempted to carve out a neutral political position during the war – often coinciding with a preference for the moderate reform agenda of the Christian Democrats, local politics represents a mixed bag. In municipalities such as San Ildefonso, having failed to consolidate the trust of either dominant political force nor transformed local property rights, the reform path communities are constrained by the contradictory currents of contentious political mobilization and reactionary authoritarianism.

In order to explore the impact of these experiences on how post-war local development unfolded, I examine how otherwise similar neighboring communities chose these different paths and crafted different local responses to political opportunity during the conflictive period (1961-1980) that predates the onset of full civil war. The goal of this chapter is to establish the existence of insurgent (challenging) and counter-insurgent (stabilizing) sub-cultures (accumulated political experiences of empowerment and disempowerment) as a basis for evaluating their respective impact on post-war decentralized development. By focusing on one

region of the country, I will show how effective challenges to local inequality involved solutions to collective action problems that had long conspired to impoverish the rural peasantry. Where authority was uprooted and redistributed downward, and trained on changing the local structure of inequality, people found myriad ways to organize, coordinate, and defeat pre-war power structures. Where pre-war authority went unchallenged, collective action strategies have proven more compatible with inequality. These experiences were carried forward in the respective design of wartime and post-war institutions.

Exploring the interpretations of these choices reveals a contested notion of the meaning of history. For some, the war and the sequence of events leading to it, represent a sacred, empowering and decisive break with a formidable structure of injustice. For many who felt they defended their communities against communist aggression, the meaning of history remains somewhat less articulate, silenced to a greater degree by a fear that continues to restrict freedom of expression. For others, the war was profoundly destructive and disempowering, leaving human loss and a bitter nostalgia for a somewhat sanitized pre-war existence. For the latter group, perhaps the majority, recent history remains a clash of ideals and brutal realities in which they were not the protagonists, but rather the accidental victims.

Regardless of one's orientation, political experiences associated with the war left a deep imprint on the post-war institutional terrain. So in this chapter, I lay the foundation for understanding political empowerment in post-war El Salvador by examining the choices made by people in three fairly representative communities (Tecoluca, Jiboa Valley, San Ildefonso) focusing on the pre-war years leading up to the outbreak of civil war. Sharing many common features, but differing in terms of competing political experiences, these three representative case studies of insurgent, hard-line counter-insurgent and moderate counter-insurgent municipalities are all located within the same conflictive region of El Salvador. The political experiences that distinguish these municipalities have generated competing empowerment strategies that in turn have shaped the types of local institutions charged with carrying out postwar reconstruction. In later chapters, I trace these historical paths to the reconstruction and development experiences of those same communities in the post-war period.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ I draw here upon an immense body of literature on the Salvadoran conflict, but mostly the excellent analyses of the origins of the war in the regions of Aguilares and Guazapa, Carlos Cabarrús (1983) Tenancingo, Cuscatlan, William Durham (1979) and Elizabeth Wood (2003); Chalatenango, Jenny Pearce (1986), Morazán, Leigh Binford (1996, 1997), Sonsonate and San Vicente, Tom Gibb (2000) and San Vicente, Serena Fogaroli and Sara Stowell

More importantly, my goal is to explore how historical patterns of mobilization help us understand the present. By arguing that collective action is necessary for decentralization to avoid the pitfalls of political capture, the types of mobilization or individual strategic actions chosen to survive the terribly violent years leading up to the 1992 truce (and beyond), will be of specific interest. All sides were mobilized, but what was the lasting effect of these experiences on how people deal with obstacles to the collective action problem in the post-war context? This question is central to my historical analysis.

The chapter will be organized in five sections. First, I sketch a comparative overview of the three municipal case studies. Second, I map out the main trends in the Salvadoran agrarian structure in which the civil war was rooted. Third, I discuss how expanded elite access triggered by religious and political divisions serve as a central variable defining the political opportunity structure. In the fourth section, repression is addressed as a final element of political opportunity. I outline for each case study community a key act of repression that clearly illustrates the circumstances under which strategic quite different action choices were made. I conclude by outlining the three empowerment strategies that emerge from pre-war political opportunity structure.

B. THREE PATHS TO WAR – AN OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDY MUNICIPALITIES

My map of the physical, social and economic landscape of San Vicente and much of the entire paracentral region (defined here as consisting of the department of San Vicente, the department of La Paz west of the Jiboa River and eastern Usulután, are dominated by extremes (see Figure 4.1). The topography contrasts a fertile coastal basin surrounded on three sides by towering volcanoes (*Chinchontepec*, *Tecapa*, and *Usulután*) on the western and eastern borders, the rocky

(1997); as well as several general works, Tommie Sue Montgomery (1995); Enrique Baloyra (1982); James Dunkerley (1983, 1988) Charles Brockett (1988); Robert Williams (1986).

foothills of Cabañas to the North, the Pacific Ocean to the South, and sliced in half by the country's main river, the Lempa.

San Vicente, the smallest of the three paracentral departments, is the setting from which the case study municipalities were chosen because of the close proximity of insurgent and counter-insurgent communities within the same geographical area and the nature of agrarian inequality that fueled discontent. Inequality emerged as a long standing feature of the region's export oriented development process, which began with *anil*, (or indigo) a blue dye produced during the colonial period. Land and income concentration deepened considerably in the late 19th century, when the El Salvador's volcanic slopes were transformed into some of the most productive coffee fincas in the world at the expense of indigenous communal property rights. While coffee is grown on the higher slopes of the paracentral region's volcanic peaks, it represents only a minor share of the country's coffee sector. The advance of other cash crops (cotton, sugar and cattle) displaced the region's indigenous and *campesino* farmers to the margins of a rural economy dominated by large export oriented farms. Where export crops thrived, the peasant subsistence livelihood from *colonato* and other forms of sharecropping, renting or wage labor were most severely disrupted. This rupture in landlord – peasant relations was one of the primary triggers for rebellion.

During the civil war, the zone supported two of five political-military theaters defined by the FMLN, parts of which were occupied by insurgent combatants and a reservoir of mass organizations for much of the conflict. Local support for the FMLN as well as continued allegiance to the right wing ARENA and PCN are both deeply rooted in the regional peasant population, as reflected in trends of post-war governance that is relatively divided between these three parties at the municipal level.

The socio-economic traits of the paracentral zone feature high quality agricultural land with enormous economic potential, significant productive infrastructure and access to both national and export markets. Land remains at the center of all economic activity in this region. In the course of the war, some of the most prized productive assets were expropriated and redistributed by the FMLN to poor people. A sample of the main historical characteristics of each case study municipality is summarized in **Table 4.1** below.



Figure 4.1 Map of Paracentral Region of El Salvador

1. The insurgent case study municipality of Tecoluca

Tecoluca is the largest municipality in San Vicente, extending from the tip of the *Chinchontepec* volcano to the Pacific Ocean. The Littoral highway and series of feeder roads that divide the flat coastal lowlands are a testament to the importance of pre-war cotton and cattle haciendas that once dominated the sprawling landscape. Trucks hauling sugar cane have now replaced cotton, and compete daily with a slew of other passenger and commercial vehicles that transport goods and people back and forth to the markets, *maquiladora* (clothing assembly) factories and extended families that live in San Salvador. A more complex patchwork of rural communities,

cooperatives, old and new urban settlements and large farms now occupy what once were sprawling estates.

The Lempa River snakes along the Tecoluca's eastern border. The country's second major bridge, *el Puente de Oro* (bridge of gold), as well as boat traffic along the riverbanks, connects Tecoluca with its sister communities of Jiquilisco on the Usulután side. The river provides great potential for irrigated agriculture, but the lack of adequate infrastructure investment has failed to realize this potential. Moreover, periodic flooding in the lower Lempa valley is a persistent vulnerability to the inhabitants in the lowland half of the municipality. The urban center (*cabecera*) sits in the shadow of the volcano to the north and foothills to the east. Destroyed on various occasions by war and most recently by earthquakes, the town center remains a vestige of what it once was. The urban houses strike a contrast between the relative wealth of their former occupants, the regional landowners who have long since fled, with the still evident bullet marks that their current caretaker occupants have little incentive to repair.¹⁵⁰

Tecoluca represents a great case study of FMLN-insurgent political experience. The combined influence of intransigent landed elites with recourse to military and paramilitary security forces, a relatively swift increase in landlessness and rural insecurity, and the sustained presence of religious and student organizers, contributed to formation of an impressive network of Christian base communities and the region's first rural union - the *Unión de Trabajadores del Campo* (UTC).

Religious organizing by two parish priests and the dozens of catechists trained at nearby vocational centers posed some of the earliest organizational challenges to the local alliance between landlords, the military and conservative church hierarchy in Tecoluca. Soon after the arrival of David Rodríguez in 1969, who was then accompanied by Rafael Barahona several years later, the role of the church in local politics was transformed. Local landowners immediately identified the threat to their interests posed by the influence of the progressive church in raising the confidence and establishing solidarity within and between the poorest communities in Tecoluca. Despite the early warning signs, religious organizing was somehow provided nearly five years to sink deep roots in the collective consciousness of the Tecolucan population. Like a number of parishes throughout El Salvador where progressive priests, young

¹⁵⁰ Interview, Pincho Mendez, former mayor of Tecoluca, April 4, 1998, estimated that 70% of the houses in the cabecera are not occupied by the owners.

and old, were opening the door to the political conversion for hundreds of catechists and lay leaders, this period in Tecoluca represented a formidable social foundation.

Peasant mobilization was met early on with repression, which only intensified local organizing. By the late 1970s, peasants seized haciendas, churches and public offices, sabotaging harvests and productive property, as well as swelling the ranks of clandestine military groups that carried out small attacks against security forces. Landowners responded in kind by unleashing the National Guard and regional military brigades to annihilate entire communities suspected of insurgent activity. The *Fuerzas Populares de la Liberación Popular Farabundo Martí* (FPL) recruited heavily in this zone and battled government forces here throughout the war.¹⁵¹

Efforts to introduce agrarian reform cooperatives in Tecoluca in the early 1980s failed. Most of the intervened farms, as well as much of the municipality, was abandoned during the early years of the war. Many of these same abandoned reform properties were seized by the repopulation movements coordinated by the FPL beginning in 1986. Over half of Tecoluca's arable land was redistributed to ex-combatants and civilian beneficiaries of the post-war Land Transfer Program. In all, two thirds of all arable land was redistributed by some program related to agrarian reform. Widely recognized as an insurgent municipality, Tecoluca suffered tremendous human and physical damage, but insurgents retained control over some of the most prized economic and political assets in the region.

Politically, the FMLN has governed Tecoluca for four consecutive terms since 1994, the first elections in which they have participated as a legal party. Despite targeted repression of local leaders, the FMLN has sustained widespread support in Tecoluca. Most local institutions now employ FMLN ex-combatants. However, political sympathies are by no means homogenous. Large clusters of ARENA supporters, including some demobilized ex-combatants of the armed forces, reside in several densely populated *cantónes* within Tecoluca. These pockets of opposition to the FMLN are located close to sites that once served as military garrisons during the war. The Christian Democrats and smaller centrist parties have no base in Tecoluca. The political leadership in Tecoluca comes from the rural poor and middle classes,

¹⁵¹ The FPL was the largest of five revolutionary organizations that joined in 1980 to form the FMLN.

many of whom were experienced officers with the FMLN and have received post-war vocational training or education scholarships.

Most traditional elite families abandoned the zone for San Salvador or the U.S. during the war and do not participate directly in local politics. For most of the 1990s, Tecoluca experienced large flows of migrants seeking land or reuniting with family. In recent years, the creation of small rural housing developments have attracted new migrants to the region, particularly those who work in the maquila factories about an hour's bus ride away. At the same time, sustained economic recession has triggered a belated out-migration of the municipality's youth, unwilling to work in agriculture. Of the many social and economic reconstruction projects initiated in post-war period, a network of communities in the lower Lempa region supported by an NGO – CORDES has carved out a respectable portfolio of small cooperative ventures that include a variety of fruit and vegetable production, a cashew processing and export business, a dairy factory and an organic sugar cane mill. Despite the noted shift in property ownership, the local economy is dominated by sugar cane, cattle and basic grains production and receives relatively significant investment through NGO and bilateral aid programs.

2. The hard-line counter-insurgent case study municipal of the Jiboa Valley

The pro-Government, hard-line counter-insurgency case combines the four small San Vicente municipalities of **Guadalupe, Nuevo Tepétitan, Verapáz, and San Cayetano**, all belonging to a contiguous strip of the *Chinchontepec* volcano that slopes down to one of country's most scenic valleys. Each of the four towns numbers between 5,000-7,000 residents. The four are treated as one municipal case study that I refer to here as the **Jiboa Valley**. The mayors of the respective municipal governments are attempting to form an integrated micro-region that would rationalize costs and share assets in recognition that any single municipality on its own is too small to be administratively viable. The Jiboa Valley is bordered on its northern perimeter by the Pan-American Highway, and extends eastward to the outskirts of departmental capital of San Vicente. A view of the valley from the highway above reveals one of the most picturesque patchworks of small and medium size farms in the country. Dominated by sugar cane and corn farms, this image gives the perception that smallholders are more common in this area. While

less clearly demarcated under forest cover, coffee is cultivated in both large and small plots at higher altitudes. *Trapiches*, or family operated sugar mills, are common and a private coffee *beneficio* is also located in Nuevo Tepetitán. The Acahuapa River offers natural irrigation in the valley, but access to water is a major problem in the communities located higher on the volcano.

One major difference with Tecoluca is that the presence of major landowners is felt in the Jiboa Valley. None personify this presence more than Alfredo Cristiani, former ARENA President and one of country's wealthiest citizens. Cristiani owns various prime coffee fincas, a processing mill, a flower export facility and a number of other assets in this region. On any weekend, Cristiani's helicopter can be seen retreating to his rural estate (one of several), replete with Swiss chalet constructed of all imported materials, private pool, water tanks, electrical power station and private road, all nestled among several hundred hectares of meticulously pruned and well guarded coffee trees. On Sundays, the permanent labor force invites local soccer teams from the outside the estate to play on what is likely the only soccer field of its kind, a level surface carved from the steep slopes and lined by majestic *ceiba*, cedar, *conacaste* and pine trees.

The interests that control the volcano and much that it looks down upon include family representatives of ARENA stalwarts and coffee barons (Cristiani-Burkhard, García-Prieto, Guirola, Llord, Borgonovo, Molina, Alfaro, Bonilla, Dominguez) as well as regional landed elites, such as (Angulo, Miranda, Henríquez, Iglesias, Espinoza and Escafini). This may explain why the first U.S. designed counter-insurgency program was launched to stabilize government control of the *Chinchontepec* volcano. The agrarian reform touched few farms in the Jiboa Valley, with only 9% of overall land being redistributed (only 200 ha. in the form of Phase I cooperatives).

Table 4.1 Key Historical Attributes of the Case Study Municipalities

	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Jiboa Valley	San Vicente	El Salvador
Political Experience	Hard-line Insurgency	Disputed Zone	Hard-line Count Insurgency	Department	National
Demography					
Population 1998 est.	26,000	11,000	23,000	156,336	6,100,000 (1.9%)
Pop. 1992	16,746	8074	18,841	143,000 (-0.33%)	5,118,599 (1.73%)
Pop. 1971	25,413	9013	15,640	153,398	3,554,648 (3.48%)
Pop. 1961	18,837	6440	12,060	112,920	2,510,984 (2.82%)
Pop. 1951	14,362	4,947	10,323	88,972	1,855,917 (1.6%)
Pop. 1930				77,534	1,436,900
Pop. 1913	7,400	2,544	9,608		1,225,835
Pop. 1893	2,520 (1500 indig.)	1,393	5,248	40,500	703,500 (1.7%)
% Rural 1998	71%	75%	60%	58%	52.7%
Population Density 1998	106	80	267	132	291
Population Density 1950	50	35	130	74	88
Political Orientation (1)	FMLN	PDC	ARENA	ARENA	ARENA
1971 Agrarian Structure					
Total Land Area (ha)	28500	13600	7300	118100	20,935,000
Arable Land for Ag Use	18474	10892	5265	74143	1,451,985
Cultivated Land ¹⁵²	11533	3170	3845	42,740	932,716
- Temp Crop Land ¹⁵³	7821	1294	2427	27064	488,436
- Coffee Farm Area	279	14	1077	1811	147,039
- Cotton Farm Area	2994	0	0	3645	14,328
- Sugar Cane Farm Area	76	2	847	2073	23251
- Pasture Area ¹⁵⁴	7053	7679	651	29,739	507,970
- Basic Grains Farm Area	3907	1216	1190	17726	277,058
Total No. Farms	1896	939	1337	13081	270,868
- Coffee Farms	23	1	270	540	40,779
- Cotton Farms	45	0	0	51	18,571
- Sugar Cane Farms	17	2	487	1484	11012
- Cattle Farms ¹⁵⁵	318	150	152	2041	34,736
- Basic Grains Farms ¹⁵⁶	1,500	800	600		

¹⁵² Total equals sum of temporary crop land, permanent crop land, prepared pasture, and forest.

¹⁵³ By the definition given in El Salvador's Agricultural Census, temporary crop land includes annual crops such as corn, beans, rice, wheat, cotton, sugar cane, other and idle land that was previously used for annual crop cultivation.

¹⁵⁴ Includes both prepared and unprepared pasture.

¹⁵⁵ Farms with 5 or more cattle. Includes farms that devote a smaller part of the farm for basic grains production.

¹⁵⁶ I refer here to farms that grow corn, sorghum, rice, or beans, either independently or in combination, as the primary economic activity. Totals are estimated since the 1971 Agricultural Census does not permit the precise disaggregation of this activity.

Table 4.1 (continued) Key Historical Attributes of the Case Study Municipalities

Total Land Gini				0.81	0.81
Coffee Gini	N/A	N/A	0.80	0.80	0.85
Total Perm. Farm Workers	3794	1782	2536	23371	494,023
Tractors	444	6	187	954	15,731
Production Cooperatives	1	0	1	3	28
Farms w/ Credit	118	13	77	905	17510
Total Credit ¹⁵⁷	\$739,661	\$25,744	\$17,740	\$1.16 mn	\$53.5 mn
Land Reform (2)					
Land Grade I-III	62%	5%	35%		18%
IV-VI	27%	10%	25%		28.3%
VII-X	11%	85%	40%		51.5%

Sources: DIGESTYC - Censo Agropecuario (1974), Barón Castro (1978) UNDP El Salvador Human Development Report, various years; De Grajeda, et al. (1997); PRISMA (1997); Instituto Geográfico Nacional (1994); Ministerio de Economía-DIGESTYC (1998); and Seligson (2000a); El Salvador Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE), various years.

Due to its proximity and commercial importance, the Jiboa Valley communities have traditionally had close economic, social and political ties to San Vicente and Cojutepeque, offering some indication of basis for the region's conservative interests. The four towns collectively share a very different history and common political experience than Tecoluca during the war, despite their location less than 180 degrees around the *Chinchontepec* volcano. The Jiboa Valley remained largely under government control during the entire war.

Support for progressive religious or political organizing never took root here despite early attempts to build base communities and recruit local catechists. The pro-landowner influence of Bishop Aparicio de Quintanilla in San Vicente and Juan Arnoldo Platero, parish priest of Guadalupe, stemmed the efforts of more progressive priests to establish CEBs in the region. With a small organizational foundation from which to recruit, revolutionary organizations failed to establish the network of militants that were trained to provide security for fledgling political movements.

¹⁵⁷ Nationally, credit was provided by Banks (67%), ABC (10%), Federación de Cajas de Credito Rural (7%), informal intermediaries (10%), other (6%). Within San Vicente, the Banks provided 75%, ABC (12.7%), Federación de Cajas Rurales (5%), Other (4%).

As in much of the region, but perhaps with greater effect, death squads operated freely in the Jiboa Valley during this period and the early years of the war. Many peasants served in the civil defense corps, others acquired experience and connections in the Organización Democrática Nacionalista (ORDEN), a rural paramilitary intelligence organization. Most families had sons in the military. A minority had family members that served in the FMLN, but suffered severe and unreciprocated reprisals.

Peasant organizing began in the early 1970s, but failed to penetrate the entire region. A political turning point occurred when a strike by coffee pickers on several of Cristiani's fincas was violently suppressed in March of 1980. Twenty residents of the *cantón* of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* were killed by the military and buried in the local church. This massacre had a chilling effect that effectively stopped local organizing. A spiral of revenge killings marked the early years of the war in the Jiboa Valley, and left the victim's families with a deep reservoir of personal betrayal, distrust and resentment that has overwhelmed any clear political analysis of the conflict.

Several factors may have contributed to the lack of an endogenous insurgent movement in the Jiboa Valley. The absence of cotton and a higher density of smallholding peasants throughout the valley and on the slopes of the volcano may have mitigated the rapid change in land tenure that occurred in other regions. In defense of their small parcels, Jiboa peasants may have enjoyed greater security than most. Faced with the uncertainty of rebellion, there existed a shared commitment to the status quo conditions and greater risk aversion toward collaboration or active participation with the FMLN. Jiboa Valley communities were more receptive to the counter-insurgent influence of local coffee growers and reactionary Catholic clergy.¹⁵⁸

The political leadership in local institutions derives from ex-civil defense recruits and the commercial middle class. A significant number of residents that have permanently relocated to San Salvador and visit only on the weekends, remain active in local politics. However, all local decisions of any significance are subject to the discretion of landholding elites or their appointed representatives. Local development projects have relied almost exclusively on government agencies, rather than the accompaniment of NGOs. Projects tend to focus on the provision of

¹⁵⁸ This section is based on interviews with Jiboa residents, nearly all of whom asked to remain anonymous. FMLN leaders who were generally less concerned about anonymity also emphasized the strategic constraints of defending and holding of valley terrain between the Pan-American highway and the volcano as well as the lack of sources of water on the Northern slopes of the volcano. Interview Pablo Parado Andino, June, 1998.

basic services rather than production or employment, which is left to individual initiative or the initiative of existing coffee and sugar cooperative associations. While the coffee association tends to be dominated by the largest growers, the sugar association, based in Verapáz, has less disparity among members and tends to reflect the median sugar producer interest vis a vis contract negotiations with the closest mill (Jiboa).

The Christian Democrat party once held a modest but loyal following in the zone, but that base has since diminished, blending into support for either ARENA or the small but growing base of new support for the FMLN, which is now the second political force locally. Symbolic of this political realignment is Nuevo Tepetitán, where the mayor elected in 1997 and several council members were FMLN ex-combatants. Still, ARENA and PCN enjoy strict party control in the majority of the Jiboa Valley, despite periodic defections between the two. Continuing a patron-client tradition, ARENA party elites actively reward party loyalty and punish disloyalty regarding decision making about the development needs of a particular community or the fulfillment of public duties by elected officials. As a result, inclinations toward local pluralism are more circumscribed by the imprint of authoritarian rule than other case study regions.

3. The moderate counter-insurgent case study municipality of San Ildefonso

San Ildefonso sits in the northeast corner of San Vicente, above the Pan-American highway. The municipal border with *Cabañas* department to the north is divided by the *Titihuapa* River and to the east, San Ildefonso faces the reservoir of the 15th of September hydroelectric dam. A 10 kilometer road, the only all weather road within the municipality, connects the town center with the main highway, just prior to the other principal east-west bridge, *Puente Cuscatlán*, which crosses into Usulután. With a number of small valley basins that are tucked between the rolling foothills of northern San Vicente, the soil is generally rockier and of lower quality. Small cattle and dairy ranches dominate the landscape. The city of San Vicente is the closest commercial center, a day's travel for some in the more remote communities. Local market days are once a week. The center of daily activity remains the rural villages.

San Ildefonso represents a mixed political experience case study as a municipality influenced by the establishment of land reform cooperatives and the ideology of the Christian

Democrats before the war and for most of the 1980s. During the war, the political sympathies of San Ildefonso sought a more neutral course between the two fires of hard-line insurgency and hard-line counter-insurgency. Santa Clara and San Esteban Catarina to the east and the communities of northern San Miguel to the west were zones controlled by the FMLN, where demobilization camps were ultimately located. To the north, Villa Dolores and much of *Cabañas* was known for its support of the military. Caught in between, the highland regions of western San Ildefonso were militarily contested by both sides during the war. The majority of peasants living in San Ildefonso remained strategically loyal to both sides. Many served in the civil defenses, others served as militia for the FMLN. Families in the more remote villages provided food and logistical assistance to both the FAES and the FMLN when requested.

Like Tecoluca, San Ildefonso farmland was dominated by large properties that were concentrated in the hands of four major families.¹⁵⁹ Sorghum, rice, and cattle farms provided wage labor and access to small plots of marginal land for most peasants. Peasants that worked mostly as *colonos* were treated poorly, even brutally by ruthless cattle ranchers such as Manuel Aguilúz. Residents in the community of Los Almendros spoke of a massacre of 12 peasants by the Treasury Police that allegedly occurred in the late 1960s on a farm owned by air force officer, Miguel Hernandez Gavidia.¹⁶⁰ However, many recollected memories of “*patronos buenos*” and a risk aversion among many former *colonos* to assume management responsibility for the large farms that employed them. Few communities organized during the 1970s and the work of visiting liberation theology priests did not take root in the San Ildefonso region, although the influence of Father Alirio Napoleón Macías in San Esteban Catarina was more instrumental in motivating rebellion.¹⁶¹ Sporadic and isolated incidents of repression and violence during the war were not a factor in altering sympathies of most that chose to stay. Neither revolutionary nor deep loyalties to the military distinguished San Ildefonso.

The 1980 land reform transferred some of the largest properties and the PTT transferred another 15% of the municipality’s land to local peasants. In total, 30% of all land was

¹⁵⁹ According to local sources, the four principal landowning families were the Marín, Melendez, Amaya and Torres.

¹⁶⁰ The massacre was reported to have occurred on a second property of Hernandez located near the Lempa River. Hernandez was also the brother of PCN president at the time, Fidel Sanchez Hernandez.

¹⁶¹ This section based on interviews with San Ildefonso residents who requested anonymity.

transferred to landless peasants representing about one of every five producers. The land quality is generally inferior to that found in Tecoluca and parts of the Jiboa Valley, yet the unrealized potential is tied to low pre-war investment by smaller scale cash strapped owners. The oldest, most productive farms were located in the land bordering the Lempa river.¹⁶² Cotton and melons were cultivated in the Lempa valley region and sugar cane was attempted in the early 1970s by one large highland landowner with unsatisfactory results.¹⁶³ The municipality lost much of its highest quality productive land used for export crops prior to the war, perhaps as much as 10% of arable land, which disappeared when the farms adjacent to the Lempa river were expropriated by the state in the 1970's to provide space for the 10,000 hectare reservoir that powered the 15th of September hydroelectric dam. The eastern half of the municipality that borders the dam was more heavily defended by the army and therefore was less conflictive. Many peasant families in the lowland communities adjacent to the dam confide that the loss of these lands as a source of seasonal employment had a greater impact on their livelihoods than the war itself.

A mixed agrarian structure of reform cooperatives, a handful of remaining medium sized farms, and many smallholding ranchers displaced few peasant farmers and thus offered little incentive for FMLN to recruit and secure control over a large part of the zone. The more remote, highland communities of the municipality were very conflictive, with many people temporarily abandoning the zone between 1982-84. FMLN tactical errors in their early policy toward the cooperatives contributed to the alienation of many peasants in San Ildefonso to the revolutionary movement. Cooperative leaders in at least two communities were executed on charges that they were government informants. More skillful FMLN command improved relations later in the war in many of these western highland communities, but suspicion of the FMLN still limits overt partisan political activism. Post-war FMLN support comes from these more conflictive communities.

Distrust of the FMLN and the concrete benefits of the agrarian reform created the strongest political base for the Christian Democrats among the three case study municipalities.

¹⁶² The hacienda of Abel Paras, with cattle and sugar cane, was one of the original families of San Ildefonso, at the turn of the century.

¹⁶³ Cotton was reportedly planted on Hacienda Lempa by Manuel Antonio Marín (or Teleflor Ortíz) and a *trapique* was installed for the local milling of sugar cane on the farm of Ebelio and Francisco Noboa. (Interviews, Ebelio Noboa, Lolo Melendez, May 1998)

Local elite families (Aguilúz, Noboa, Lazo, Melendez) were networked to the PDC during the Presidency of Duarte, and although most have crossed over to the PCN or ARENA, still exercise considerable influence on municipal decision making. Orlando Arevalo, populist peasant leader and Duarte protégé during the agrarian reform era, lived most of his youth in San Ildefonso. Now an iconoclast deputy with the PCN after being expelled from ARENA, Arevalo can mobilize thousands of San Foncho and Vicentino farmers.

A PDC mayor governed during most of the war. However, both ARENA and the FMLN now claim about 50% of the local vote since the collapse of the PDC after 1989. The first ARENA mayor was elected in 1997 and despite the best efforts by ARENA leaders to undermine her administration, won re-election in 2000 on a PCN ticket. Political organization throughout San Ildefonso has reflected the identity crisis of its municipal leadership. Competition for municipal funds and local office between lowland, highland and urban communities can be understood by sub-municipal geographic political motivations. NGOs, some closely aligned with the FMLN, have worked in the highland communities of PTT beneficiaries, while government agencies finance local development projects in the former PDC base among lowland communities. ARENA hardliners come from middle class of landowners, professionals and merchants that dominate the urban center, and have held most of the political posts.

Like Tecoluca, San Ildefonso experienced population declines in the 1980s due to the violence. Like the Jiboa Valley, many families sent their children to the U.S. and remittances now play a significant role in the local economy. Lacking any clear regional development plan, individualist strategies prevail. Expectations for modest improvement in status quo livelihoods are center around dairy and basic grain production and the paving of the principal road that leads to neighboring *Cabañas*.

C. LAND OWNERSHIP AND LOCAL AUTHORITY IN THE PRE-WAR PERIOD

The achievements and aspirations of these communities in the post-war period can be traced back to their different political experiences. Several factors stand out in any explanation of why some challenged the widespread poverty and injustice, others acted alongside the military

and government to resist these challenges, and a third group did their best to escape the conflict by staying neutral. These factors include: a) the pre-war agrarian structure and its impact on socio-economic relations between the landed elite and the peasantry; b) the presence of political leadership, including local and international elites, but particularly the influence of the Catholic church; and finally c) the impact of repression on local organizing. These three factors help us understand the competing empowerment strategies deployed by the FMLN and the military-government during the 1980s and how people in these communities responded to them.

1. The Pre-War Agrarian Structure and the Export Boom

Questions of local politics or development are inextricably linked to the structure of agrarian production. The rise and inevitable fall of export prices have historically been an important trigger for social unrest. Indigo, the first Salvadoran export crop,¹⁶⁴ and the indigenous forced labor that it required were the ingredients of the first major agrarian revolt in January 1833 (Domínguez Sosa 1962, 1995; Cevallos 1920: 48-54; Calderón 195; Guerra 1962: 58; White 1973: 72-74). Accumulated grievances combined to spur Anastacio Aquino to lead a largely indigenous army of about 2,000 Nonualcos on a brief campaign that resulted in the sacking of the provincial capital of San Vicente.¹⁶⁵ Independence and the ensuing regional wars eliminated what few protections that indigenous people had under Spanish rule. Finance of regional wars forced a restoration of tribute on indigenous communities. Communal resources continued to be confiscated and indigenous conscripts were forced to defend state property from frequent ladino tax revolts. Labor abuses were common in the production of indigo, such as the operation in which Aquino and his brother labored in Santiago Nonualco (about 5 km to the west of Tecoluca).

Several events in early 1833 sparked the revolt. Aquino's brother had been put in stocks by the *hacendado* as a punishment. At the same time, a company of about 100 Nonualco

¹⁶⁴ The exception may be *cacao* trade prior to the Conquest.

¹⁶⁵ San Vicente was designated by the short-lived Central American federation as the capital of El Salvador in 1834 until 1840.

conscripts were nearly annihilated while trying to put down a ladino insurrection in San Miguel. In response, Aquino organized a rebellion. Recruiting both indigenous and poor ladino insurgents, Aquino led a month-long pogrom that left several cities in ruins. Wealthy ladino estates were targeted and goods confiscated from the rich were redistributed to the poor. The attacks were designed to articulate a demand for social justice rather than simply ethnic revenge. Aquino's forces mercilessly sacked and briefly occupied the city of San Vicente. The principal Catholic church, where the wealthy had stashed their fortunes, was not spared.

History reports that Aquino was killed by government forces, his severed head displayed in several towns to mollify elite anger and warn other potential indigenous insurgents. Local myth, however, claims that Aquino rests in a hammock strung between the twin peaks of *Chinchontepec*.

This account of rebellion endures in the minds of both the landowning class and the FMLN ex-combatants to this day. When Aquino and his soldiers were forced to retreat up the slopes of the volcano in 1833, one of his cannons was left behind in Nuevo Tepetitán. The cannon is now proudly displayed in the local elementary school. During the war, the Salvadoran armed forces fired the cannon in the public square, aimed toward the FMLN occupied volcano, in order to motivate the local civil patrols. Today, the Tepetitán council is seeking funds to build a monument to Aquino in the square, with the cannon pointed toward San Vicente, the direction from which government troops and National Guard have always entered. Beyond Tepetitán, the symbolism of Aquino's resistance is visible both in the prominence it holds in the local educational curricula and popular culture of FMLN governed towns, as in its absence in those Nonualco towns from which the movement originated but are now governed by PCN or ARENA mayors.

Nearly a century after Aquino, a similar confluence of factors surrounding the collapse of coffee and the social relations between landowners and the largely indigenous peasantry also resulted in an agrarian revolt. A 50% drop in global coffee prices, transferred in large part to the poor and middle class through wage cuts and job loss, exposed the concentration of land and wealth generated by rapidly rising exports (Lindo Fuentes 1990; Perez-Brignoli 1995). Many landless laborers and smallholder coffee growers were least able to endure the price shock. In 1932, an attempted insurgent uprising influenced by leaders such as Farabundo Martí of the Salvadoran Communist Party was attempted in a dozen municipalities in the Western third of the

country. The revolt was quickly and ferociously put down with the massive slaughter of an estimated 30,000 people (Anderson 1971). While this second event spared the paracentral region, it too has seared the collective memory of peasant and elite alike.

So too did the pressures brought by the next phase of agrarian capitalism that began in the 1950s set in motion a train of events that would lead again to conflict.¹⁶⁶ Land and income inequality are widely held as one of the root causes of the civil war. The volatility of the global markets for these crops upon which the Salvadoran landed elite became increasingly dependent, helps explain their intransigence in the face of redistributive demands by a disenfranchised peasantry. The rapid increase in export crops has significantly influenced trends in land tenure and agrarian opportunity. There is general agreement that land concentration and landlessness both increased in the 20th century, reaching levels that undoubtedly motivated agrarian insurgency. There is greater dispute over the exact level of landlessness or inequality or how they may have varied between sub-regions (Seligson 1995; Diskin, Paige and Seligson 1996: 111-158). Such a task is complicated by the inconsistency and uneven tenure data. Beginning in this section, I analyze these long-term shifts in the Salvadoran agrarian structure, both for the paracentral region and the entire country, based on an original analysis of census and survey data that extend from 1950 to 2000.¹⁶⁷

El Salvador is a small country, only 2,100,000 hectares, about the size of Massachusetts. One third is not in production, leaving about 1,500,000 hectares in cultivation. Land used for agricultural activities has declined since 1950, signaling that El Salvador had reached its agricultural frontier. Much of this land in use is in fact not suitable for crop production and as much as a third (500,000 ha) is left as pasture.¹⁶⁸ The agrarian structure has been dominated by

¹⁶⁶ Various episodes of peasant uprisings occurred between 1833 and the 1970s, with most famous but clearly not the only instance being 1932. See Lauria-Santiago (1999), Gould and Lauria-Santiago (2004)

¹⁶⁷ This section and others in subsequent chapters that discuss land tenure and employment data are based on McElhinny and Seligson (2000). As noted, estimates of the shift in land inequality and employment are based on the 1950, 1961 and 1971 Agrarian Census and Population Census data from those and later years. No agrarian census has been conducted since 1971. To fill gaps and to bridge earlier census data with current trends, I also use estimates of land use, distribution and employment derived from the 1991 and 1998 household surveys. A detailed description of the methodology is found in Appendix D Finally, a 1988 USAID survey of land use is also incorporated.

¹⁶⁸ Altitude is also a limiting factor. The best coffee can be grown at 1,200 – 2,000 meters under shade, cotton can be grown profitably only below 500 meters, and sugar at 500-1000 meters. Cattle pasture is not limited by altitude.

the expansion of export crops. Farmland dedicated to coffee, cotton and sugar has increased from 140,000 ha. (15% of cultivated land) in 1950 to 360,000 (38%) by 1978 – over 50% of this land cultivated in farms 200 ha. or larger.¹⁶⁹

The general storyline for the Salvadoran countryside is that the export crop boom and bust cycles transformed the agrarian structure and peasant landlord relations by transferring land dedicated to basic grains production into export crops, and replacing *colonato* labor contracts with cash rents and wages. *Colonato* is defined as resident salaried labor that is often provided a parcel of land to work on the margins of a larger hacienda, a house, food and some services, in return for labor on the larger property and in some cases, on other farms. This form of tenure was allegedly rescinded by the 1965 minimum wage law.¹⁷⁰ In short, cotton, cattle and sugar pushed many sharecropping peasants literally to the margin of the rural economy, as tractors, fences and export minded owners' modernized agricultural production and reduced demand for peasant labor. Landlessness and land poverty increased dramatically. At the same time, the 1971 agricultural census showed that almost 70% of land in farms larger than 500 hectares was being underutilized as pasture or not cultivated at all. Export intensification also accelerated deforestation trends, although the Pacific coast had already undergone considerable deforestation by peasant subsistence production.

By 1950, direct tenancy (cash rent) and indirect tenancy (*colonato*) together accounted for 38% of all farm land tenure and the remaining 62% of farms were owned. By 1961, *colonato* increased to 25%, raising indirect tenancy to 44%, and most likely reached 50% if mixed tenure farms are included.¹⁷¹ However, the advance of cotton accompanied an increase in cash rents

¹⁶⁹ By late 1970s, coffee occupied 200,000 ha. cotton 110,000, sugar 50,000 ha, and cattle pasture 500,000. The rest was devoted to basic grains.

¹⁷⁰ While the number of *colonos* has clearly decreased from their peak of 55,769 (25% of all farmed properties) in 1961, it hasn't disappeared, the legal restriction notwithstanding. The term "censo" is used to describe what is in fact a complex variety of sharecropping contracts that usually involved some form of fixed or proportional share of harvest crop as payment for use of land. See Adams (1957: 433-436) for a description of the geographic variation in sharecropping contract terminology that still frustrates accurate agrarian surveys.

¹⁷¹ This increase in *colonato* is likely associated with the cotton expansion, beginning with the invitation of peasants to clear forested land in preparation of eventual cotton planting. Mechanization rapidly lowered the number of *colonos* necessary to produce cotton.

(30-39%)¹⁷² from 1961 to 1971 and the effective elimination of *colonato* contracts, reducing it to only 6%.¹⁷³

a. Inequality

Between 1951-1971, total land dedicated to agricultural production declined by about 80,000 ha. while the number of farms increased by nearly 100,000. Thus, the average farm size declined as land for food production was converted by large farms into cotton, cattle and sugar, squeezing many farmers with access to land into increasingly smaller and less fertile parcels. Between 1950-1971, the average farm size declined from 8.8 ha to 5.4 ha. The main cause was subdivision among poor and medium sizes farms that created many new small farms.¹⁷⁴ Some large farms were also broken up into medium size properties. By 1971, the average rented farm was only 2 ha, and the average *colono* farmed only half a hectare. At the same time, there were 15 farms over 2,500 ha. each. Although the Gini coefficient for national land inequality dropped slightly from 0.83 in 1961 to 0.81 in 1971, these are extremely high levels of inequality.¹⁷⁵

These trends were particularly acute in the paracentral region, disproportionately exposed to the expansion of export agriculture. Between 1961-1971, land dedicated to coffee, cotton and sugar increased from 26% to 36% of all cultivated land. San Vicente experienced a rise in inequality over this decade, from 0.80 to 0.81, values which are near the median for El Salvador.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² The 1971 Agricultural Census does not precisely categorize a segment of farms that combine production by owner and rented plots, thus making it impossible to state the exact level that renting reached.

¹⁷³ Cotton expansion was accompanied by changes in laws extending the minimum wage of permanent rural workers (1965) and rent ceilings, which also expedited this switch from sharecropping to cash transactions.

¹⁷⁴ A cultural factor that exacerbates land inequality in El Salvador is that poor families tend to subdivide small properties among all dependent children or at least among the males. Wealthier landowners tend to pass on the entire property through inheritance to only the eldest son, or find that children more likely to take non-agricultural jobs are less interested in land.

¹⁷⁵ The 1971 census failed to include 129,534 ha (8.2%) of the farms, many of which were large properties, which may have led to an underestimation of land inequality.

¹⁷⁶ Regional land inequality varied from low gini values of 0.678 in Cabanas and other northern departments to high gini values of 0.878 in the coffee growing department of Sonsonate.

b. Landlessness

The overall changes in agricultural occupations are summarized in Table 4.2, based on a methodology that is described in Appendix D, based on Seligson (1995) and McElhinny and Seligson (2000).¹⁷⁷ However, I make several changes to this methodology. Following the government definition, I include as part of the economically active agricultural population all men and women above the age of 10.¹⁷⁸ The landed population is defined as those producers having access through ownership, rent, *colonato* or other forms of tenure to land greater than 2 hectares.¹⁷⁹ Land poverty includes those producers deriving the majority of their income from farms less than 2 ha. Permanent and temporary wage laborers are combined under agrarian labor, although the latter typically outnumber the former by 2:1 ratio. Unpaid family labor is known for 1971, and estimated by the same 12% ratio for other years.¹⁸⁰ Finally, total agricultural employment and unemployment are taken from the population census.

Later survey analyses of the agrarian population show that household economies include mixed income streams, combining farm income with wage income and non-farm income. As such, there is some overlap between the land poor and agrarian labor when the land and

¹⁷⁷ Principal sources are the Agricultural Census and Population Census for each year.

¹⁷⁸ Seligson argues that 16 years of age rather than 11 should be the cut-off for the active adult working age population in agriculture, suggesting that most youth have no short-term expectation of owning their own farm unless through family inheritance or a wife's dowry. For the 70% of all farms less than 2 hectares, neither of Seligson's proposed options are likely to alter patterns of landlessness. Diskin (1996: 117) argues that either way, it is irrelevant. At the time of the survey, if they are economically active adults – they can only be classified as landless. We might dispute whether children between 11 and 15 can be considered adults. Undoubtedly, child labor is a fact of rural life, in just the same way that 11 year olds were conscripted by both sides during the war. Age should be a factor in determining a dignified livelihood, but sadly is not. The definitional difference that sets age 11 as a lower bound for defining an economically active population in agriculture equates to 53,858 additional persons in my estimate of the for 1971, a 10% increase over Seligson's estimate that are regrouped mostly in the unpaid family labor category.

¹⁷⁹ Estimates of subsistence minimum land parcels are contingent on the quality of the land, which varies significantly in El Salvador. Seligson uses 1 mz, which is too low. Others argue that as much as 9-10 ha is the minimum needed to support an average family White, (1971: 133), Menjivar (1962). Phase III of the land reform which transferred tenant properties to their occupants, set a limit at 7 ha. During the Peace Negotiations, the FMLN proposed between 4 and 12 ha., depending on location. Wood (1993:37). See Diskin (1996:118, fn 9) for comparison of different land poverty estimates.

¹⁸⁰ The population census for 1971 does not distinguish unpaid family labor.

population census data are compared and an adjustment is made to estimate the total land poor.¹⁸¹ Agrarian wage labor is calculated by subtracting all other occupational categories from the total employed agricultural workforce.

Table 4.2 shows that the extension of export crops is closely associated with land inequality and landlessness. In the twenty year period from 1951-1971, the total number of farms increased by over half, while the number of subsistence farms (here defined as 2 hectares or less), rose even faster (80%). The landed farmer percentage of the agrarian labor force declined from 18.2% to 11.7%. Even among the subsistence farms, only about two thirds enjoyed secure tenure (ownership). Almost one in four farms are subsistence farms (land poverty), whose increase in absolute terms explains the persistence of land inequality, despite the parcelization of some large farms. It also reflects the limits to land acquisition among poor families and the custom of subdividing small farms among all children.

Landlessness is a contested concept.¹⁸² Most, but not all, unemployed, unpaid or wage earning laborers want some land to farm although it is impossible to estimate a precise percentage. If landlessness is defined at a minimum as unpaid family labor plus temporary (day) wage laborers (two thirds of agrarian wage labor), then it was 41.5% of the total agricultural labor force in 1961 and decreased slightly to 40.2% in 1971. If the unemployed and/or the permanent wage labor force are included as Diskin (1996:115) argues they should, landlessness easily tops 60% of all agricultural workers and reaches 66% by 1971. In either case, it is likely that landlessness increased as further cotton production reached new heights in the 1970s.

The controversy surrounding the measurement of landlessness is often wrapped up in the attribution of some threshold with revolutionary potential (Prosterman 1976; Diskin, Paige, and Seligson 1996). Peasant revolution is based on rural class structure. Of all types of peasants, sharecroppers or wage working peasants are the most likely revolutionaries, but only when faced with an owner dependent upon agriculture as the primary source of income. Paige argues that it

¹⁸¹ These surveys indicate that 20% of agrarian laborers, that is those employed in wage labor, also have their own small farm up to 2 hectares. To avoid double counting, 20% of the total farms smaller than 2 hectares are deducted to produce an estimate for land poor.

¹⁸² Estimates of landlessness vary considerably for the 1970s, due in some part to disputes over the optimal metric. Simon and Stephens (1982) claimed 65% of the rural population was landless, while Seligson argues that only 38.1% of a smaller base population (the economically active population in agriculture) is landless based on 1971 agrarian census figures. Durham (1979:50) estimates landlessness using the latter metric at 21.8%. See Seligson (1995:43-74) for a discussion of estimating landlessness.

is not landlessness per se that predicts revolution, but the social organization of agrarian production (particularly sharecropping) pitted against land owners dependent on farm income that matters most.

Table 4.2 Agrarian Occupation Structure (1950-1971)

	1951		1961		1971	
	No.	Pct	No.	%		Pct
Total Farms	174,204		226,896		270,868	
Farms <= 2 ha	105,054	60%	155,555	69%	188,527	70%
Landed population (>= 2 ha)	69,150	18.2%	71,341	14.6%	79,341	11.7%
Land Poor	84,043	22.1%	124,444	25.4%	150,822	22.2%
Agrarian labor (Permanent and Temporary)	162,037	42.7%	210,573	43.1%	286,440	42.3%
Unpaid Family Labor	45,575	12.0%	57,831	11.8%	81,355	12.0%
Total Employed Agrarian Labor Force	360,805	95%	464,189	94.9%	597,957	88.2%
Unemployed	18,990	5.0%	24,909	5.1%	80,000	11.8%
Total Agrarian Labor Force	379,795		489,098		677,958	

Indeed, it might be argued that including family or temporary labor as landless might actually misrepresent the problem if these laborers are adding wages to a landowner's family income. We might wonder whether the inclusion of unpaid family labor as landless might overstate the true extent of the problem if most poor farms inevitably rely on family off-farm labor wages that would in turn not exist if they became eligible for ownership otherwise.

Paige is correct to say that any single measurement of landlessness is an insufficient revolutionary indicator. On the other hand, income diversification strategies of Salvadoran families were necessary to cope in a rural economy in which 80% of the population was poor and underemployed, but by no means adequate to achieve dignified or even stable livelihoods. Absent this alternative path to economic security, most agrarian laborers as well as a

considerable number that may have migrated to urban areas, probably still looked toward eventual land ownership as the only possible path out of poverty.

Table 4.2 paints a rather dire picture of agrarian inequality in 1971. Nearly three quarters of all farms were too small to provide a subsistence living, and between 200,000 and 350,000 additional agricultural workers were landless. If the average reform property of 3 hectares was made available to every estimated landless farmer in 1971 and in addition a supplement of 1 hectare was made available to the 130,000 land-poor farms with less than 1 hectare, a total of 1,180,000 hectares would need to be transferred. This represents 75% of the total farmed land in 1971. In the years leading to war, this level of redistribution was not beyond the realm of imagination.

c. Coffee

These trends continued into the 1970s and were even more pronounced in the paracentral region.¹⁸³ However, not all export crops had the same effect on rural landscape. Since its introduction in the mid-19th century, **coffee** has been the dominant export crop for El Salvador, constituting as much as 85% of all exports (revenue). Land cultivated in coffee has grown steadily in the 20th century, increasing 40% alone between 1971-1978. Coffee prices declined beginning in the late 1950s, but rose dramatically in the 1970s, peaking at \$210 per *quintal* (over four times the average export price in the preceding thirty year period).

The average coffee finca in El Salvador was about 4 ha. in 1971, although the most commercially profitable fincas were much larger, in the range of 50-300 hectares.¹⁸⁴ Usulután has about 13% of the country's coffee area, as well as some of the larger properties. The average finca is 10 ha., there are several hundred estates in the 200-300 ha. range. On the other hand, the majority (90%) of the coffee farms in San Vicente and La Paz are owned and operated by smallholders (ave. 3 ha.).

Indeed, towns such as Guadalupe were considered to be more politically conservative due to attitudes associated with the higher relative presence of smallholders. In the pre-war Jiboa

¹⁸³ Calculations for San Vicente, La Paz and Usulután produce similar estimates for landlessness in 1961, 1971.

¹⁸⁴ 1961 and 1971 Agricultural Census, DIGESTYC (1967, 1977).

Valley, 20% of the farms were coffee fincas and another 36% were sugar cane farms. However, in the case of coffee, the average finca in Guadalupe was 0.5 ha, compared to at least 7 larger fincas of 50 hectares or more. The distribution of land in coffee production within Guadalupe was highly unequal (Gini coefficient of 0.80). Following a national pattern of highly concentrated production, coffee offers the perception of smallholding, but is often more unevenly distributed than farmland in general.¹⁸⁵

Moreover, profitability of small and large coffee fincas differs significantly. The larger fincas tend to be higher quality land between 1,200-1,800 meters in altitude. Coffee yields vary between 5 to 35 *quintales oro* (dried beans in units of 100 lb sack) per hectare based on geography and level of technification. Some of the largest coffee producers in the region saw annual profits as high as \$3-4 million. The Cristiani-Burkard family, for example, produced 16,375 *quintales* in 1980-81, for a net profit of \$750,000. In addition, Cristiani operated the Acahuapa *beneficio* in Tepetitán and exported, adding another \$2,000,000 to his earnings (Arias 1988: 196, Chapter 2). Smallholders with 2 hectares of coffee (50% of all coffee producers in the region) were likely to produce 40 *quintales* and reap net earnings of about \$2,000 to \$3,000.¹⁸⁶ While the disparity between the coffee elite and the smallholder is striking, even half a hectare of coffee could generate a livelihood that was preferable to other rural incomes, at least when prices were high.

d. Sugar cane

Sugar cane is notably less skewed in terms of its distribution and is traditionally more of a small farmer activity than the other cash crops. In part, this was due to the survival of traditional sugar production techniques suitable for local markets. The average sugar cane farm in the Jiboa Valley was 1.7 ha in 1971, compared to a national average of 2.1 ha. Many small and medium

¹⁸⁵ Only 10 of 540 fincas in San Vicente (ave. 30 ha/finca) reported receiving technical assistance (others ave. 3 ha/finca). For the entire region (148 of 5220 fincas, 2.8%, ave. finca 46 ha) reported receiving technical assistance.

¹⁸⁶ Based on a yield of 20 qq per hectare and production costs of \$50-\$70 per hectare, and a sale price of \$110-125 per quintal, slightly lower than the average sale price in 1980 of \$150, which most smallholders would be unlikely to obtain when they had to sell to processors like Cristiani.

size sugar cane growers owned, operated and rented out their *trapiches*.¹⁸⁷ Sugar, perhaps more than coffee, reflected a smallholder base in the Jiboa Valley. However, like coffee, profits from sugar production favored large growers whose net earnings per hectare were nearly twice that of small farmers (\$1600 compared to \$600-\$700 per hectare). Annual wages in the sugar sector averaged below \$500.

Sugar cane production increased rapidly in the 1970s in San Vicente after the construction of the Jiboa Sugar Mill.¹⁸⁸ Land dedicated to sugar cane production increased in the paracentral region from 3,700 to 13,300 hectares between 1971-1975.¹⁸⁹ Large farms designed to supply the modern sugar mills for export markets began to crowd out the small producer, as average sugar cane farm size jumped to 4 ha in the region by 1975.

e. Cotton

Displacement of smallholding and tenant families as well the sharecropping *colono* accelerated in the 1950s with the boom in cotton production, which transformed much of the coastal plains (Browning 1971; Arias Penate 1988; Williams 1979; Durham 1979). Public health measures to defend against malaria, production technology advances and the building of the Pacific highway and feeder road system (1955-1963) all facilitated the expansion of cotton production in the paracentral coastal plains. During these years, 80% of El Salvador's highway budget was spent on paving the Pacific highway.¹⁹⁰ Cotton consumed more credit than any other crop, much of it heavily subsidized by the state. COPAL, the elite dominated Cotton Cooperative, flush with

¹⁸⁷ A *trapiche* is a rustic ox or motor-driven mill that converts cane sugar into *dulce de panela* – a course brown sugar cake that is preferred in local markets and by some candy makers. There are an estimated 75 trapiches in the Jiboa Valley. The larger sugar mills are owned and operated by families representing the large growers, grouped within the Cooperativa Azucarera Salvadoreña.

¹⁸⁸ El Salvador's principal export market is the U.S. with each of the Central American countries sharing a sugar quota.

¹⁸⁹ DIGESTYC (1977)

¹⁹⁰ Prodded by the World Bank, IDB and U.S. Alliance for Progress funding, the export boom went hand in hand with a significant increase in road improvements. Between 1953 and 1978, Central America quintupled its length of paved roads (1,200 to 6,000 miles), tripled secondary improved roads (5,000 miles to 16,000 miles) and quadrupled feeder roads (7,000 to 29,000 miles). Williams (1979)

profits, captured disproportionate public investment even well after cotton prices and production peaked in the mid-1960s.

Cotton production and prices fluctuated wildly from 1959-1979. Production more than doubled in the 1960s, and land dedicated to cotton reached a peak of 110,000 hectares in 1965, dropped to 40,000 in 1967, then reached 102,000 hectares in 1979, before steadily declining due to the war. Price volatility, rising production costs (including interest on loans) as rates spiked in the 1970s and lower yields all were factors in these shifts. While cotton prices reached record highs of \$60 per *quintal* in 1977, inflation, and spiraling interest rates reduced profitability for many growers. The instability of the global market for cotton induced tremendous anxiety among the cotton growing elite, intensifying the most reactionary opposition to reform within this sector as social demands grew.

Cotton only accounted for 7% of all arable land nationally. In the 1970s, 88% of all cotton production was concentrated principally in 25 municipalities along the Pacific Coast. Large growers consumed all available coastal land, converting traditional food cultivation for local consumption into export production. In San Vicente, production and cotton farm area increased fourfold between 1961-1971, with almost all additional production occurring on farms in Tecoluca.

While there were some small cotton farms, many went bankrupt when cotton prices tanked. Larger growers extracted protection from the government through loan deferral and trade protections. About 85% of cotton in San Vicente was planted on haciendas of 100 ha or larger.¹⁹¹ Some of the largest farms in the paracentral region, between 500 and 1000 hectares, generated annual profits in the range of \$50,000 - \$100,000 per farm.¹⁹² Such profits equaled 100 to 200 times the average cotton laborer salary.¹⁹³ The Gini coefficient for land distribution in the San Vicente cotton sector was 0.86. Small cotton farms were more frequent in Usulután, with only 65% grown on farms greater than 100 ha. *Colono* contracts plummeted between 81-

¹⁹¹ In 1961, Salvadoran farms under 50 hectares represented 82% of growers, but just 17% of cotton land. Farms with 200 or more hectares cultivated 60% of all cotton.

¹⁹² Salvador Arias (1988: 240), estimating for the 1977-78 production season. There is evidence of harvests valued in the millions of dollars on the largest single farms (3,000-4,000 ha) when prices were high.

¹⁹³ Op cit, estimated at 4.25 ¢ per day for general labor and ¢6.5 per day for harvest labor, totaling about \$500 per year.

94% in the paracentral region during this period. Cash rent contracts, on the other hand, increased by 33% (73% in San Vicente) even as the cost of renting increased as well.

As much as 56% of all cotton in the country was cultivated on rented property. Renting in the cotton sector, along with credit, went mostly to medium and large farms, many of whom were non-agricultural professionals that lived in El Salvador but wanted to invest in the cotton boom. The volatility of cotton profits, linked to credit availability and land rental rates, favored the largest growers with the best lands and thinned the ranks of many small and medium producers in periods of low profits. These swings reinforced a concentration of wealth within the cotton elite, allowing a diversification into banking, inputs, marketing, ginning, and textiles, as well as investments in other export crops (Colindres 1977; Sevilla 1985).

The switch from sharecropping to cash rents effectively marginalized many poor families that became surplus labor for cotton production that required less labor than basic grains. Cotton also displaced corn directly. Jiquilisco was the largest corn producing municipality in 1950. By 1971, it was the largest cotton producer. The long standing guarantee of peasant subsistence through sharecropping contracts that provided access to marginal land and certain productive resources was severely reduced by the expansion of agro-export crops (Williams 1986; Browning 1971).

f. Beef

The expansion of cotton and cattle are closely connected. The export price of cotton had been declining between 1954 and 1969 and profits reached a plateau in 1958, even as land dedicated to cotton continued to increase. As prices shot up in the 1970s, cotton experienced another boom in planting after a drop in acreage in the late 1960s.¹⁹⁴ However, the volatility of cotton prices and yields and the increase in U.S. beef quota to El Salvador in 1971 spurred diversification by already cleared cotton farmland into cattle.¹⁹⁵ Central America's share of the U.S. beef quota rose from 5% in the early 1960s to 15% by 1979. Cattle ranching was less subtle a threat to

¹⁹⁴ Williams (1979), Arias (1988: 106). The 1971 Agrarian Census does not reflect the second expansion of cotton in the 1970s. Cotton profits were reduced by steadily rising costs for petroleum based inputs and lower yields.

¹⁹⁵ It's worth noting that cotton profits were investing in an expansion of coffee as well, which grew by 50,000 hectares in 1970s.

subsistence crop producers. Cattle, even on improved pasture, required less labor than other rural activities and enclosed even the marginal lands to which domestic use agriculture had been confined by cotton. In Tecoluca, 40% of all farmland was designated as pasture, compared to 17% for cotton. The majority of these ranchers were 100 hectares or more. According to Picho Mendez, former ARENA mayor and cattle rancher of Tecoluca, the town boasted one of the country's major cattle auctions – an indication of growing importance of this activity.¹⁹⁶ Although the lowest of all Central American countries, Salvadoran beef exports jumped from zero to \$14 million by 1979.

Beef production profits were also concentrated among a few large landowners. Beef profits were combined with foreign investment and development program assistance to diversify their stake beyond grazing into fattening, slaughtering and export packing enterprises. The beef boom produced even fewer rural jobs than cotton or coffee and thus intensified landlessness.¹⁹⁷

g. Food crops

Several authors have illustrated the historic competition for land between coffee, cotton and corn in El Salvador. Daugherty (1969: 138; Wilson 1970: 122-127), document how coffee displaced peasant production of food crops on the volcanic slopes, driving producers into the valleys and toward the relatively less fertile northern frontier departments.¹⁹⁸ This shift contributed to temporary food shortages, price volatility and imports – all of which exacerbated social stability prior to the final straw of coffee's collapse, which in turn ignited again the tinder of peasant protest but brought down the full weight of state repression. A series of popular uprisings associated with growing landlessness culminated in 1932 *matanza*.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ According to Mendez, who owned more than 500 cattle in the 1970s, Tecoluca hosted the regional auction on Thursdays of each week.

¹⁹⁷ One estimate is that cotton cultivation requires six times more labor per acre per year (30 man-days) than cattle ranching (5 man-days), sugar offers seven times more (38 man-days), and coffee offers thirteen times more (68 man-days). SIECA, (1973).

¹⁹⁸ See also Adams (1957), White (1973) and Browning (1971:293-362)

¹⁹⁹ Torres (1962:9) documents at least five violent peasant protests between 1872 and 1898.

The disappearance of indigenous communal land, traditionally dedicated to *milpa* production and relatively equally distributed, contributed both to the steady loss of land planted for grains production as well as a rapid increase in land concentration (Browning 1971: 16). In a prophetic categorization that undoubtedly influenced Roy Prosterman's design of the 1980 counter-insurgent land reform, Durham shows how three phases of land concentration consumed all but a small fraction of Salvadoran farmland over four centuries. The first major land grab was the colonial appropriation through land grants of up to a third of the country. Phase I land concentration extracted 355,000 hectares in the form of some 440 haciendas that were established in this period by incorporating or adjoining indigenous land.²⁰⁰ After the outright elimination of indigenous *ejido* or common property, the third and final stage of land concentration occurred between 1940 and 1979, with expansion of cotton, sugar and cattle.

A second phase of land concentration was inaugurated by the land redistribution laws of 1881 and 1882 that allowed already wealthy landowners to acquire increasing amounts of land, but particularly in the coffee highlands. This second massive land grab, magnified by the boom in coffee profits prior to 1930, produced an aristocracy of wealth that Adams refers to as "the cosmopolitan upper class."²⁰¹ It is worth noting that Tecoluca, Verapáz and San Vicente were three of the first of among 43 Salvadoran municipalities to pass municipal resolutions between 1879 and 1880 that reinforced national legislation toward the privatization of *ejidal* land and incentives for the expansion of coffee production.²⁰² A census determined that indigenous communities asserted access rights to as much as a quarter of national territory. In San Vicente, 7,000 ha were claimed as *ejidal* land and 27,070 ha. in Usulután. Although underestimated, both

²⁰⁰ Gutierrez y Ulloa (1807) estimates that the five largest estates near the end of the colonial period ranged between 1,400 hectares and 6,000 hectares.

²⁰¹ On coffee see Adams (1957:462-463) and rural class see Wilson (1970: 59, 132).

²⁰² Browning (1971:309-313). The author notes that in 1874, a San Vicentian coffee producer, Esteban Castro, submitted to the national government a report on the problems restricting the expansion of coffee, including a weak regulatory climate, labor scarcity, and the low productivity of *ejidal* lands. The report urged the government to require half of all *ejidal* land to be planted in export crops and the official work day should be regulated to ensure a cheap and steady labor supply. Castro's report influenced a governmental decree that established nurseries for coffee trees throughout San Vicente in June of 1874 (fn. 20, pg. 300).

claims represented 17% and 27% of total cultivated land as defined by the 1950 agrarian census.²⁰³

Up to three years were provided in principal for indigenous occupants of ejidal land to convert to coffee, after which such lands could be expropriated. These municipal acts were not implemented immediately in Tecoluca and Verapáz, eliciting a significant fine by the national government for “general lack of civic spirit and love of progress.”²⁰⁴ However, one year later the impact of the legislation was unmistakable, Tecoluca counted 50,000 coffee saplings, Verapáz, 60,000, and Guadalupe, 30,000, Tepetitán, 20,000.²⁰⁵ Particularly among the wealthier ladino population in the city of San Vicente and municipal functionaries, the 1879 legislation hastened illegal encroachment on ejidal lands before the three year limit had expired. Peasants, indigenous and *mestizo* alike, had to pay to obtain a legal title to the land they worked. By 1881, the government simply abolished indigenous claims to communal land, and a year later abolished ejidal land. In 1907, an Agrarian Law was passed to regulate displaced indigenous rural labor, replete with a agrarian judges and a rural police force to enforce labor obligations and prosecute a variety of designated survival practices considered harmful to elite owned natural resource base.²⁰⁶

Although the best coffee and valley land was claimed quickly, the redistribution of communal land by municipal governments lasted over eighty years. In San Pedro Nonualco, which borders Guadalupe to the west, Marroquin shows that as late as 1962, 58% of the indigenous villagers had access to 68% of the land within the municipal boundaries (Marroquin 1962). If this evidence is any indication of the state of pre-war land distribution in the

²⁰³ Browning (1971) illustrates the location of communal lands declared in the 1879 census (see Map 19), suggesting the incompleteness of the data. No data was reported for La Paz in the 1979 census, although a large percentage of the department would likely have been claimed. The 1950 data on departmental land cultivation is used as the closest temporal reference on land use, although the population in the late 19th century was only one half of that in 1950.

²⁰⁴ “Informe de la Gobernación del Departamento de San Vicente,” D.O. Aug. 2, 1879, cited in Browning (1971: 310). The report noted that all municipalities except Santa Clara had established nurseries and one local coffee producer had sold 29,000 trees to neighboring growers.

²⁰⁵ “Informe de la Gobernación del Departamento de San Vicente,” D.O. Feb. 21, 1880, cited in Browning, pg. 312).

²⁰⁶ Browning (1971: 355-359). The expansion of shade grown coffee production gave local institutions a new found appreciation for conservation, particularly after thousands of former indigenous occupants were now reduced to clearing marginal land, hunting or rummaging firewood to survive. The rural police, which began in Santa Ana, would become the National Guard in 1912.

Nonualcos region of La Paz, and perhaps extending into the Jiboa Valley, it suggests that shifts toward land concentration were not as swift in all places.

Comparing data for all three phases of land concentration, Durham (1979) shows that the above described processes of land concentration and export agriculture were more responsible than population growth for the increasing land scarcity and persistent shortfall in the food supply.²⁰⁷ The gap between food production and population growth suggests that by the late 1950s, El Salvador was not producing enough food to feed its population. Durham notes that El Salvador was the only known country that sorghum, which is typically used for animal feed, became an important human food. Consequently, by the mid-1960s, El Salvador's population experienced the most rapid rate of growth (3.5%), export crops accounted for 42% of cultivated land and the country was importing almost a third of the required corn supply. When cotton prices slumped and yields declined in between 1965-1967, corn imports soon declined as land was shifted back to grains (Durham 1979: 32).

The expansion of export crops displaced smallholder cultivation of basic grains, but population growth required greater production of food grains. Between 1961 and 1980, the production of white corn (maize), rice and beans all increased considerably (between 20-40% per year). Most of these gains were due to productivity increases, induced by the introduction of hybrid seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Yields increased dramatically by over 12% per year in the 1960s for each crop, then fell flat as production increases became a function of area (see Table 4.3). This apparent "de-technification" was due to a combination of factors, including the inflationary disincentives against intensification in the late 1970s, political uncertainty curtailing all investment and soil exhaustion. Prices for basic grains dropped faster than the commensurate reduction in input costs, driving already break-even subsistence production into crisis. The stagnation of basic grains productivity would continue during the war, leaving food production barely able to keep up with population growth by the end of the war (Hugo, Worman and Ramos 1992).

White estimates that corn and coffee production in 1969 each absorbed about the same amount of labor, although the value of the respective production of each crop at local market prices reveals that the national corn crop was worth less than a fifth of the coffee harvest (White

²⁰⁷ Durham (1979: 21-62) presents the most well documented alternative to the widely popular Malthusian attributions of food insecurity in El Salvador.

1971: 142). Even when other basic grains are included (rice, beans and sorghum), the total value of these crops barely exceed the wages of paid in coffee. Nevertheless, food security is rooted in grain production and these crops tend to absorb more work and receive more attention from the rural population.

Table 4.3 Summary of Basic Grain Production area, output, yields and imports (1961-1990)

	Years	Area ha	Production 1000 mt	Yield Qq/ha	Imports 1000 mt
White Corn	1961-65	172,877	187	24	33
	1971-75	206,929	339	35.7	40
	1981-85	250,022	465	41.4	60
	1986-90	273,717	543	42.9	57
Rice	1961-65	10,782	24	48.6	1.8
	1971-75	11,571	39.5	74.3	2.5
	1981-85	13,247	47.5	78.6	9.4
	1986-90	13,266	51.9	85.7	12.3
Beans	1961-65	25,895	13.8	11.4	15.2
	1971-75	44,058	32.9	17	3.3
	1981-85	54,845	41.3	17	0.8
	1986-90	63,717	43.6	14.3	2.9
Sorghum	1961-65	97,749	94.2	21.1	2.0
	1971-75	125,720	145.6	25.6	0.3
	1981-85	115,314	129.3	24.7	0.1
	1986-90	121,677	117.6	21.4	0.8
Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock – Directorate General of Agricultural Statistics (MAG-DGEA), cited in Hugo, Worman and Ramos (1992); FAO (2005) database for food imports					

h. Regional integration and migration

Landlessness turned farmers into squatters on public lands and migration increased sharply to the towns, San Salvador and to Honduras - a traditional safety valve for shrinking rural opportunity. Soyapango, which was a small suburb on the eastern edge of San Salvador, saw its population jump from 20,000 in 1961 to over 260,000 in 1992 as poor rural migrants settled in shantytowns. However, even during the apogee of the Central American Common Market, urban job creation could not absorb the flow of rural migrants.²⁰⁸ Many rural migrants joined the informal urban economy. By 1969, 150,000 Salvadorans had migrated to Honduras, squeezed by the extensive growth of export agriculture and subsistence crop land scarcity. Tensions between the two countries resulted in a brief but bloody war that forced the repatriation of some 100,000 Salvadorans.²⁰⁹ The war with Honduras ended CACM trade for El Salvador, but more importantly, closed a safety valve for mounting rural social pressure.

Despite nominal increases in the minimum wage and concessions to labor unions, wages deteriorated significantly in the 1970s. By the early 1980s, agricultural salaries represented only 65% of their 1970 purchasing power. In urban areas, real wages for industry and commerce were had fallen to 1970 levels (CEPAL 1982).

i. Power and Powerlessness in the Pre-war Countryside

Local economic opportunity was controlled by landed elites. There occurred shifts within this group, although a few families have traditionally dominated. Pre-war land distribution in Tecoluca was highly concentrated among twenty landowning families. The pre-war land reform ownership structure reads like a who's who of El Salvador agrarian oligarchy with diversified holdings in multiple sectors, industry and finance.²¹⁰ Much of the land in the paracentral region was once the property of the family of José Simeon Cañas, one of the founders of the Salvadoran

²⁰⁸ One estimate of the total number of new manufacturing jobs created annually at 20,000 per year in the 1960s, but this employment was disproportionately absorbed into the micro-enterprise sector. Traditional industrial sector employment remained virtually stagnant in the 1960s, but increased by 32,000 to 152,000 in 1975. Moreover, as industrial employment growth rate slowed in the 1970s, real wages also declined. Bulmer-Thomas (1994), Jung (1980).

²⁰⁹ Some settled on land donated by large landowners in the Usulután side of the lower Lempa valley.

²¹⁰ Colindres (1977), ISTA Farm Lists, FMLN PTT Lists; Grajeda, Cummings, Moreno and Almendárez (1997)

republic, born in Zacatecoluca. Before some of largest properties were subdivided in the 1940s and 1950, the Angulo family was reportedly the sole owner of a triangular wedge that encompassed the Southern half of the volcano and adjacent coastal plains, stretching to the sea.²¹¹

Expansion of cotton, cattle and sugar, backed by state subsidized credit, both directly and through infrastructure.²¹² The coastal highway began in 1958, and flood control and drainage improvements on most estates were all heavily state subsidized. Don Eliseo from the village of Socorro in Tecoluca worked as a laborer clearing land for cotton in the 1950s and recalled that the urgency to plant had devastating consequences for the forest that remained in the coast. The Hacienda Nancuchiname, which consists of an enormous forested property along the Lempa River in Jiquilisco was owned at the time by the Regalado Dueñas family – one of the so-called “fourteen families” that ruled in El Salvador. Virgin forest was converted overnight to cotton. Earth moving equipment felled trees 3-4 feet in diameter and simply buried the trunks in the rush to plant.²¹³ The introduction of cotton gradually absorbed all available land, displacing most small farmers and contaminating homes near the cotton fields with air delivered fumigants.

Some landowners owned properties throughout the region. The Tecoluca Angulo estate was eventually broken up to providing land for their children (Julia, Luís Roberto, Coralía, Vicki) and selling other parcels. Their holdings were so extensive that they included cattle, near the hacienda household center (Hacienda Tehuacan Opico), indigo, sugar cane, coffee (Haciendas Peña, Barrios, La Paz) and cotton (Paz Opico).

There was also a considerable presence of active and ex-military officers, other well-placed government officials and their families that owned and operated large farms in the region. The family of Salvadoran President Molina reportedly owned some 8,000 ha in 1913. Farms owned by the Molina family totaling 1,000 ha in Tecoluca were expropriated in the agrarian reform in 1980. Other notable military owners in the area included Colonel Aníbal Portillo (former PCN member of the 1961 junta) and Col. Vides Casanova, who headed the feared

²¹¹ The Hacienda Nancuchiname, a massive forest along the Lempa River in Jiquilisco, was also originally a property of the Angulo's before they sold it to the Dueñas family.

²¹² During the 1950s, the road system nearly quadrupled – with nearly a quarter of all roads being paved. (SIECA, 1967 cited in Bulmer-Thomas, 1994). In the eight most important cotton municipalities, 70,000 ha of cotton cropland were brought into production between 1950-1971.

²¹³ Interview, Don Eliseo, Socorro, Tecoluca, July, 1998.

National Guard for most of the 1980s.²¹⁴ Other notable military figures present in the region included Fidel Torres, ex-Minister of Defense and owner of *Los Naranjos* in Tecoluca; Air Force Major Miguel Hernandez Gavidia, brother of PCN ex-President Fidel Sanchez Hernandez, and owner of Los Almendros in San Ildefonso; and Col. Napoleon Alvarado (department commander during the war) was a local landowners in San Antonio Jiboa, Verapáz.

In addition to military landowners, the export boom attracted a new breed of farm operator to the paracentral region. Urban professionals acquired or rented land from large landowners that began to break up their estates in the 1950s, to cultivate export crops or cattle. Absentee farmers would work in the capital and supervise rural operations on the weekends. Some went bankrupt during bust periods of low prices, but their presence in the region, like the possible expansion of military owned farms, intensified the decline of peasant security. As non-local farmers with a relatively lower sense of obligation to the *colono* population or communities, these new agrarian bosses accelerated the demise of pre-existing patron-client relations.

Adams argues that the introduction of new non-local agrarian elites and the conversion of a segment of the existing landed elite into an absentee and diversified “cosmopolitan upper class” effectively squeezed the provincial landed class to whom the lower and middle classes turned in times of need. Among the cosmopolitan elites, particularly when the subject is indigenous, Adams argues that the prevailing relations of rural El Salvador in the 1950s could be described by attitudes of almost hostile superiority. In areas where no distinct cosmopolitan class emerges, the patron – client relation tends to be described by a discourse of equality. “The *acomodados* (provincial elites) and *humildes* (colonos and sharecroppers) are really one, that there are few differences between them, that it is just a matter of some being better off, even though intermarriage is almost unheard of” (Adams 1957: 465). According to Adams these two relationships (cosmopolitan and provincial elites) signified different phases of agrarian capitalist expansion. The former is the future, the latter is the past. “Where there is a cosmopolitan upper group present, the feeling of equality is usually weak if existent at all.” These combined processes of agrarian modernization eroded a fragile social contract.

²¹⁴ Hacienda Miramar in Guajoyo, Tecoluca, one of several properties in the area that was redistributed to demobilized FAES beneficiaries of the PTT.

j. Political capture

Economic power enabled the largest landowners to capture most of the incentives for agrarian development and diversification. State investment in extending the Pacific highway system and improving drainage systems in the coastal farms were public subsidies that clearly favored large growers. Access to cheap national credit and technical assistance was almost exclusively limited to a handful of the largest producers. Even programs such as the U.S. Alliance for Progress were diverted to reinforce rather than reform the unequal agrarian structure. White points out that the majority of the pre-1967 beneficiaries of the USAID Program for Land Improvement farmed more than 75 hectares, although this limit was set as maximum for eligibility (White 1973: 171). The primary interests controlling the USAID financed beef export packing plants in El Salvador were members of the traditional landed oligarchy (Colindres 1977; Williams 1986:104).

As noted, tremendous fortunes were made during periods of high world prices and profitability. However, profits were not shared with labor in good times and costs were typically shifted downward in bad times. The largest, more diversified growers were better insured against the downturns. Many smaller and medium producers of export crops experienced considerable economic instability. It was only in the late 1970s that political pressure accumulated for a sharing of this wealth, primarily through wage increases that often failed to keep pace with inflation. The hard-line interests within the Salvadoran landed elite chafed at even these relatively modest concessions.

At the same time, the prevailing tax structure was generous to the landowning elite by exempting many exports and eluding any significant property tax. Overall tax revenue in El Salvador has been low by developing country standards and property tax yields have been almost negligible (3.5% of GDP in 1965, and 8.4% in 1970). Cotton and coffee revenue, some 80-90% of all export revenue were exempt. A fiscal crisis triggered by lowered regional import duties associated with the liberalization of trade within the CACM prompted tax reforms which effectively gravitated toward the most regressive option, the creation of an official indirect sales tax.²¹⁵ The political veto capacity of the agrarian elite effectively nullified the type of fiscal

²¹⁵ El Salvador employed a stamp tax on all official transactions which generated most of the country's tax revenue.

redistribution from export earnings that was necessary for sustained industrial development down the road.

Although conditions varied, the *colono* or sharecropping contract conveyed some mutual obligations (landlord charity in exchange for peasant humility). Sharecropping or *colonato* typically required a donation of a quarter to half the crop (2 to 4 *fanegas* or 600 to 1,200 pounds of corn per *manzana*), or 15-20 days labor per month for the owner, in return for access to land on the hacienda.²¹⁶ Fair or not, the deal permitted some wiggle room for the peasant by having debt indexed to actual, or reported, harvest and committed the owner to offer some insurance against the producer bearing the full cost of failed harvests. For many *colonos*, this subsistence contract was tolerable and preferable to the cash rent contract that has now become the norm. Land rents increased steadily and finding land also became more difficult.

Permanent, relatively skilled laborers, were the minority, but often enjoyed more favorable working conditions. These jobs, including those 35,000 in agroindustry (coffee *beneficios*, cotton gins, sugar mills and fruit processing). Wages for permanent laborers were often as much as double day laborer wages, but experienced real declines in purchasing power in after the mid 1970s. Day laborers and cash rent tenants enjoyed few, if any, of these protections. Reported minimum wages for a day laborer in the early 1970s ranged from 1 to 2.5 colones per day (\$0.40-\$1.0).²¹⁷ Legally mandated wage increases of up to 5-6 ¢ per day by the late 1970s were often ignored by landowners and failed to keep pace with inflation for day laborers. The costs of living and land rental outpaced wages. Purchasing power for day laborers was estimated in 1982 to be 65% of 1970 levels (CEPAL 1982).

Harvest wages were comparatively better and represented a windfall income that could be double or triple the income earned during the rest of the year. For picking an *arroba* (25 lb basket) of coffee, the official wage was 0.50 colones (\$0.20) in 1966, but 2.85 colones by 1980. For a ton of sugar cane, the official wage was 1.25 colones in 1966, and 5.75 colones in 1980. For a *quintal* of cotton, the official wage was 2.5 colones in 1966 and 10.5 colones in 1980. Laborers were often cheated, sometimes paid by volume instead of weight as well as at wages that violated the official minimum. On average in the mid-1970s, a worker could pick between

²¹⁶ One *manzana*, a standard measure for land, equals 0.7 ha.

²¹⁷ Wages for women were officially indexed at less than 100% of male wages.

10 and 20 colones of coffee and 5 and 10 colones of cotton or sugar per day over a harvest season that lasted 90-120 days, translating into harvest incomes as high as high as 1000 colones, or nearly two thirds of a yearly salary (Montes 1986; Arias Peñate 1988).

Growing insecurity of access to land, widespread robbery at the coffee or cotton scales, refusal to pay legal minimum wages, withholding wages for months to drive up debts at local stores, and the non-fulfillment of other aspects of the rural labor contract regarding meals and medical treatment, cast an unsparing light on the extent of peasant powerlessness. Added to that were the frequent personal abuses and punishing physical treatment. On some estates, even as late as the 1970s, peasant dependency on the landlord resembled the classic mechanisms of indentured servitude. Some haciendas paid workers in company script (*fichas*), only reimbursable company stores.

Legendary accounts of inhuman cruelty were widespread and are vividly recounted today. Manuel Aguilúz, a cattle rancher with several properties and perhaps as much as 500 hectares in San Ildefonso, was identified by former laborers as one of the worst.²¹⁸ Punishment for mild offenses or mistakes approached torture. Testimony was common of landowners that were known to order guards to count the fruit on trees to monitor theft by workers, to forbid foraging among fallen fruit and to shoot anyone taking firewood or water from their property. One account of Ramón Urquilla owner of the Hacienda Llano Verde de San Ildefonso, recalled:

The children were paid 25 cents for a day of work and Urquilla would sometimes pay them, and sometimes not. The adults earned 1 colon. To earn a bit more, the children would train their dogs to hunt iguana and *garrobo*, which brought them more in a minute than they earned in a week on the hacienda. In order to force them to work for him, the owner entertain himself by killing the dogs with his 22 caliber rifle. On one occasion, a man that lived as a colono on Llano Verde carried to sell in the market some *jocote* fruit from trees that he had planted. On the road he encountered the landowner and upon seeing what the man was carrying, said to him, 'I didn't know that you are now the owner? Please get off my land as soon as you can.' And despite much begging, the man was forced to leave his house. (Regional Peasant Organization of Northern San Vicente 1997: 6)

The power of local landlords and local attitudes of powerlessness also translated into a type of supernatural mysticism that was invoked to explain the motivation and capacity of particularly feared *hacendado's* to sustain acts of injustice and accumulate wealth. Former

²¹⁸ Aguilúz reportedly owned several properties in northern San Vicente, part of Limon, Izcatlal, San Juan Romero, San Lazaro.

colonos insisted that certain cruel landowners maintained their authority and accumulated their tremendous wealth on the basis of a pact that was struck with the devil. Jose Santos Prudencio, owner of several large cattle ranches near San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca and employed as many as 2,000 people, was one such “*pactado*”. Santos was an uncompassionate and strict boss, paying low salaries and enforcing deductions for various errors on the job. At the same time, Santos’ cows produced 20 bottles of milk per day, far above the regional average.²¹⁹

Although accounts differed, most agreed that every year, 4 or 5 workers would disappear without a trace while working for “Chepe Diablo.” A worker who may have crossed Santos was often given the task of “*aguando el buey*”, taking the prized bull to a watering stream at the most remote corner of the farm. The bull would always return, but the worker would not. Those convinced that Chepe Diablo was *pactado* explained these recurrent disappearances in terms of Santos fulfilling his end of the bargain by supplying souls to the devil. Others merely attributed the disappearances to killings that precluded having to pay back wages. In either case, pre-war peasant culture’s mystification of Chepe Diablo’s power, like that of other untouchable landowners, both condemned it within the local religious framework as well as elevated the prospect of sanction beyond the reach of human intervention. These stories reveal a sense of worker impotence in the face of expanding agrarian capitalism and a crumbling social contract between peasant and landowner. As Gould argues describing similar circumstances in Pacific coast haciendas of Chinandega in neighboring Nicaragua, “such myths attempted to make sense of the exploitative nature of wage labor and the loss of land, to a Nicaraguan audience that was undergoing the transition from a peasant-based to a wage labor based economy” (Gould 1990: 28-32).

Good *patronos* – On the other hand, some former landowners were considered to be kinder or more equitable than others. Landowners that did not abandon their property attributed their survival to better relations with their workers and flexibility in negotiating with insurgents. Echoing the testimony other landowners, Ebelio Noboa, co-owner of the 210 hectare *El Castaño* sugar cane and cattle hacienda in San Ildefonso stated that he avoided losing his property or life to either side because his *colonos* regarded him as a good *patrono*. Noboa added that this perceived goodwill among those dependent upon him was mixed as well with reluctance by

²¹⁹ According to MAG Bajo Lempa Irrigation District Study, average milk production was 4 bottles per cow per day.

former *colonos* to assume the risks of managing the farm themselves.²²⁰ Typically, these claims by more moderate landowners were sprinkled with retrospective admissions that the FMLN had been justified in its initial demands for better wages and better treatment of workers. Many landowners paid war taxes to the FMLN, voluntarily or otherwise. However, this enlightenment ceased when property rights were questioned. Picho Mendez, of Tecoluca, claimed that the FMLN, “overstepped their authority by setting their sights on property, suggesting that they had the power to govern the country.”²²¹ The prevailing views among most current and former



Figure 4.2 The remains of *El Castaño*, the most admired hacienda in San Ildefonso before the war

²²⁰ Interview, April 18, 1998, casco San Ildefonso. *Colonos* for the Noboas lived in the adjacent *caserío* of El Zaiti, and did not benefit from any land reform program. Organizers in the region affirm Noboas's perception of the risk aversion within the community, but contest his benevolence. Other factors may have added to the level of fear in making overt demands. Five community members were killed while serving as FMLN militia in an ambush by FAES forces in Usulután while attempting to accompany the return of PRTC commander, Camilo Turcios.

²²¹ Interview, Picho Mendez, Tecoluca, April 4, 1998.

patronos in the region contrasts their own superior farm management experience with the inadequate capacity or interest of the workforce to take control, and a burning resentment of any rationale for land expropriation.

The hegemony of the landed class was insulated by and in turn helped reproduce attitudes of fatalism, resignation, and submissiveness among most peasants. Many former laborers who described pre-war social relations referred to him or herself as “*uno de pobre*,” an attribution that self-evidently explains or justifies the extent of suffering that they had experienced. Peasants viewed landowners as “*endiosado*” (god-like), and were obligated by custom to bow their heads in recognition of this authority when passing a landowner or their family on the road.²²² The discourse of traditional Catholicism was often invoked to reinforce the inherent status inequality between lord and peasant. A recounted local landowner’s discourse to his peasant’s reveals this ideology:

A rich landowner, upon realizing that several of his *peónes* had joined a peasant movement, called all of his workers, more than a hundred including women and children, and organized a procession with the saint of his devotion, and he marched out in front, rosary in hand, reciting the Our Father and Hail Mary, until arriving at the patio of the hacienda. There he asked, in the name of Christ, that the workers all kneel and he proceeded to preach a long sermon whose central theme was the following: The land where you all live, I inherited from my father, and you....? What have you inherited? Nothing! Therefore I am not guilty of being rich, nor you of being poor. All of this was preconceived by God. He knows what he is doing. If to me he gave land and denied land to you, all who are against that are against God. This rebelliousness is a mortal sin. Accept the decision of God in order to not fall to his ire and to lose your soul. You will have to accept the poverty of land in order to gain eternal life in heaven. The poor live in the grace of God. In this way you are happier than I, in that you are closer to heaven. So, why do you deviate from this path, and refuse to pay the increased tax? Wasn’t that our agreement? I hardly invented these obligations or did they similarly not exist when Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise? Hear what I say and follow my advice: he that has joined this movement should leave it. The same devil that tempted Christ tempts the Christian. The devil wants to lead the poor astray from the path that will carry him to salvation.²²³

The increase in landlessness and land poverty combined with falling real wages for most were symptomatic of the incredible strain that the export boom transferred to the prevailing

²²² Failure to do so, Williams claims, was grounds for eviction. (1986: 71).

²²³ Napoleon Alvarado (n.d.: 111-112), Licenciado Thesis, UCA citing Francisco Juliao, in an exchange that occurred on *Hacienda Tres Ceibas*, Sonsonate in the 1970s.

clientelist rural social contract. Cotton, cattle and sugar expansion essentially ended this semi-feudal convention. Cotton production and cattle ranching reduced the permanent labor force and led to evictions. While this displacement was necessary to expand and modernize production, especially when price shifts squeezed profits, it also removed the glue that preserved a period of social stability in the Salvadoran countryside. Peasant humility and respect for the landowners was transformed into strident calls for agrarian reform. Williams observes, “problems that had once been worked out in a personalistic give-and-take between landlord and peasant were pushed into the domain of the state” (1986: 158).

k. Thwarted Land reform

Questioning the local order typically had dire consequences. The capture of the state by the most extreme and violent landed interests insured a harsh reaction. The National Guard served as the private security for landowner power. Large grower families controlled many of the meaningful economic gremios and had direct influence in the operations of the state. Late as it was in coming, when discussion of an agrarian reform heated up in the early 1970s, landowners, particularly the cotton growers, organized the eastern cotton growers front (FARO) to block any reform measure.

The target of the landed elite was a proposal to convert several hundred thousand hectares of underutilized land in Pacific Coast into several irrigation districts, expropriate the land, invest in productive infrastructure and transfer this property to the local workforce. One such district comprising 68,000 hectares of coastal land covering La Paz, San Vicente and Usulután was targeted for expropriation by the military government in 1975 to be transferred to landless and land poor peasants as a world class irrigation district.²²⁴ Had the project not been blocked by the

²²⁴ MAG (1978). A diagnostic study that was conducted in the early 1970s sketches the pre-war socio-economic profile of the 48 communities of the coastal plains. Of the 11,363 surveyed families that populated the zone, over 83% had migrated recently to the region (42% between 1960 and 1975). Land distribution was highly unequal. Two thirds of these families (some 7,500) were landless, but worked as *colonos* or wage laborers for larger farms. Over 60% of the land was controlled by 125 owners, with farms greater than or equal to 100 hectares. The average salary per family across all rural occupations was over \$1,000 but dropped to \$650-750 for seasonal landless wage workers. Illiteracy was estimated at 54%, primary enrollment at 43%, only 3 of the 48 villages had clinics, and over 50% had no potable water source. Production of cotton and pasture for cattle occupied 69% of the land area. Credit was available to fewer than 600 producers (about 5% of all families). In terms of industry, the region contained four rice mills, one cotton ginning facility, and plans were underway by 1975 for the construction of the Jiboa sugar mill. The area was prone to flooding, with events recorded in four of the six years between 1969-1974.

region's landed interests, it may have served as a safety valve by releasing the accumulating pressure of peasant grievances. Its rejection in 1976 contributed to the polarization of peasants and landowners, and popular support for land takeovers, rural strikes, sabotage of harvests, and eventually to civil war.

D. ELITE ACCESS

Agrarian modernization reshuffled the composition within the economic elite of El Salvador. However, despite small divisions between forward looking industrialists and a backward looking landed oligarchy and the emergence of new economic and political entrepreneurs, these changes largely preserved the agenda setting power of *latifundistas* at the national level. At the same time, two other political shifts occurred that were equally significant for understanding the opportunity structure in the years leading up to the war. Parallel to the hardening of the military-landowner-government triumvirate, divisions between reactionary and radical factions of the Catholic church and the emergence of the Christian Democrats as an opposition political party created a cadre of marginal dissident elites that had a pronounced effect on peasant sympathies. These reform movements were met by intensified mobilization of peasants loyal or beholden to government authority within increasingly violent organizations such as ORDEN and various paramilitary groups.

Alliances between rural civil society organizations and elites in the insurgent, counter-insurgent and reform mobilization networks began to identify with three competing forms of political expression. The organizational trajectories of rural movements that clustered within tendencies on the right, center and left are outlined in Figure 4.3.

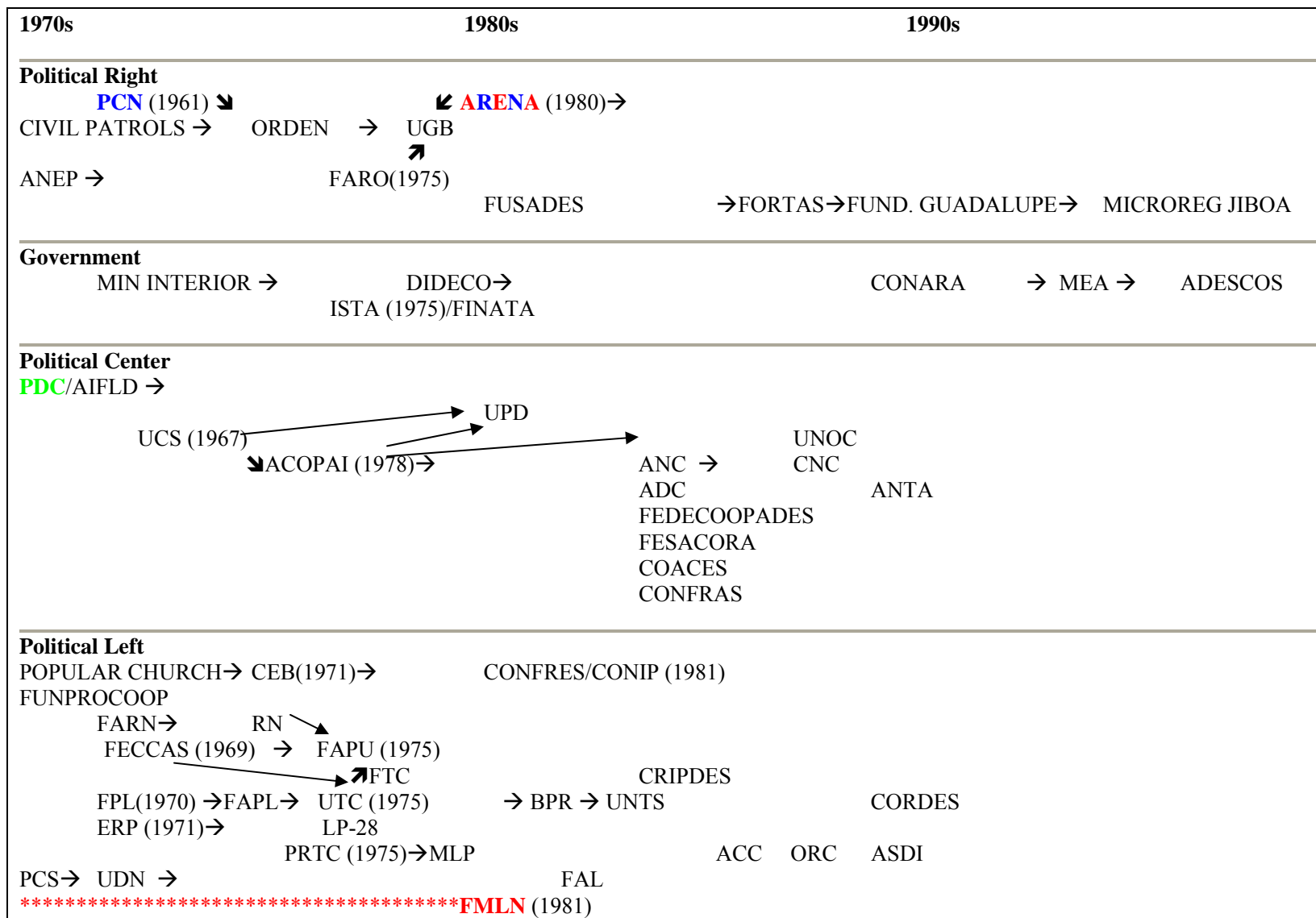


Figure 4.3 Historical Organigram – Three Paths to Rural Empowerment in El Salvador

1. Political party competition

The PCN and the PDC both emerged as new political parties in the early 1960s – the first as a continuation of military rule and the second as a moderate centrist opposition. The PCN closely represented the interests of the landed elite and the military, taking power after a coup in 1961 and ruling through fraud and intimidation until another coup in 1979. The Christian Democrats appealed to a growing urban middle and working class, but whose programs reflected a relatively milder patron-client relationship, particularly in rural areas. The Christian Democrats party won the municipal election of San Salvador in 1964 and retained it through 1972, representing a centrist alternative to growing trade unionism and more militant political movements inspired by the Cuban revolution. The PDC won almost a third of the municipalities in the 1968 elections, increasing support in paracentral departments like La Paz and the city of San Vicente.²²⁵

In some rural municipalities, PDC mayors provided the first local encouragement for bottom-up community organizing efforts focusing on basic services. Nicolás García remembers that a PDC mayor from San Vicente, Felipe Quintanilla, was the first to encourage residents of his village in *León de Piedra* to organize for rural electricity, water and improved education services in the 1969-1970 period.²²⁶ The PCN won all but 5 municipalities in the 1970 elections, eliminating this brief impulse in some municipalities for local organizing.

At the legislative level, the PDC also made significant inroads in the 1960s, winning as many as 19 of the 52 available seats in 1968, compared to 27 for the PCN.²²⁷ This trend was unceremoniously halted in the early 1970s, as the PCN re-exerted its authority through a mixture of rural paternalism and electoral fraud.

²²⁵ The PDC won 80 municipalities in 1968, including San Salvador.

²²⁶ *León de Piedra* bordered Tecoluca, but belonged to the municipality of San Vicente. Interview, Nicolás García, mayor of Tecoluca between 1994 and 2000, in April 1999.

²²⁷ El Salvador has unicameral legislature that adopted a mixed proportional representation system in 1963, where initially 9 seats are allocated to the capital department of San Salvador, and the rest are distributed according to population in the other 13 departments. The total number of seats increased to 60 in the 1970s, and currently stands at 82. Legislative and Municipal Elections were held biannually (now every three years) and every five years for President. A simple majority is needed to pass most legislation, but a two-thirds majority for ratifying foreign loans. On most, if not all questions of significance to the economic elite, the executive has until recently exercised almost dictatorial control of the assembly.

The PDC, along with a number of Catholic priests organized the Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants (FECCAS) in 1965. For the first several years, FECCAS reflected the moderate reformist influences within the PDC, and in turn remained a weak and ineffective peasant organization. In 1974, radical influences pushed FECCAS to adopt more aggressive demands for agrarian reform and a more combative political style.

The ideology of the PDC revolved around a moral centrism that was at the same time, strictly anti-communist, reform oriented, and vague on strategy for achieving social justice.²²⁸ Salvadoran Christian Democracy was, according to Stephen Webre, an ideology well-suited to the professional middle class that founded it. “While it adopted a moral orientation toward the question of social justice, it did not question the concept of class advantage itself. It retained private property as the foundation of economic life and assumed individual inequalities in its distribution, condemning such inequalities only when they were so gross as to threaten social order and development.” (100) As such, Webre views PDC thinking as traditional and backward looking.

The moderate, reformist approach was compatible with the U.S. Alliance for Progress, which found common cause with the PDC in El Salvador. With backing from U.S. AID and the Catholic church, the PDC promoted the development of cooperatives and peasant associations. By 1967, 154 state-directed cooperatives had been established, although most were savings and loans associations, or benefited urban and wealthy rural growers (Pearce 1986: 93). Under the impetus of San Salvador Archbishop Luis Chávez y González, smallholder agricultural cooperatives were organized. By 1971, about 7,500 peasant producers were organized cooperative members, many coordinated by the Foundation for the Promotion of Cooperatives (FUNPROCOOP), founded in 1967.

The U.S. American Institute for Free Labor Development was contracted in the early 1960s to train and organize peasant leaders as part of the Alliance for Progress. By 1968, AIFLD began promoting the organization of peasant unions, the first of which were established in La Paz and Usulután. The first cooperative “communal union” was formed in the *cantón* of Platanares, in costal lowland section of Zacatecoluca, La Paz. With a \$3,000 loan from USAID and support of CARITAS, 32 laborers on a cotton plantation rented 31 hectares. Some 4,000

²²⁸ For example, the 1967 PDC platform for the Presidential election emphasized legalization of rural unionization, assessing income tax to coffee production, meals for rural workers and other alternatives to full agrarian reform.

members of these communal unions were joined to form the Salvadoran *Campeño* Union (UCS). While rural unionization was illegal and landowners were adamantly opposed to any form of peasant organizing, the PCN government tolerated the experiment as a relatively harmless means for containing rural unrest.

By most accounts, the UCS represented an accommodative force in rural politics that avoided direct conflict with the authorities by virtue of its dependence on U.S. funding and the links between some of its leaders with the paramilitary right (Segundo Montes 1986: 271-284; Bonner 1984: 187-203). Personal and organizational power struggles, mismanagement and corruption did not halt the rise of the UCS. Flush with external finance, UCS membership grew rapidly in the 1970s, with bases in half the country.²²⁹ By 1980, the UCS had established some 53 pre-cooperative organizations, mostly in the western departments of Sonsonate and Ahuachapán (Montes 1980: 277-279). As AIFLD has hoped, the UCS was poised to champion the U.S. designed and PDC led agrarian reform.

One analyst commenting on the UCS impact in Chalatenango, underscored the organization's clientelist foundation. "The organization's history – its dependence on external funding, the weight of its bureaucratized central office and the careful selection and limited training of peasant leaders around certain objectives chosen for them by outsiders – had left (the UCS) prey to the manipulation of those able to offer sufficient material incentives." (Pearce 1986: 97) By most accounts, the UCS represented a rural firewall against more radical organizing and a stabilizing force for the status quo (Montgomery 1995: 106; Wheaton and Forché 1980),

The PDC experience was short-lived. The PCN used fraud and violent intimidation by the National Guard to block PDC electoral gains. PDC control at the municipal was dramatically reduced after massive fraud in the 1970 elections. Napoleon Duarte, the PDC presidential candidate won the 1972 elections over PCN candidate, Colonel Arturo Molina. Ballot box rigging permitted the installation of Molina. A failed uprising by junior military officers in favor of Duarte was crushed. Duarte was arrested, beaten and forced into exile along with many other urban opposition politicians. For revolutionary organizations such as

²²⁹ By one estimate, UCS membership reached 210,000 by 1980.

the ERP and FPL, the 1972 elections marked the closure of the electoral road to reform, initiating the first insurgent military operations in the country.

The PDC continued to compete in elections until 1977, despite blatant fraud. Among the intellectuals of this group, pressure was maintained for agrarian reform, broad reforms in the national economy, electoral system and public services – all of which proved relatively fruitless. For the PDC reformers who remained in El Salvador, just as with those of the minor third parties, the disappearing space for electoral opposition during the 1970s pushed most toward more uncompromising resistance led by popular movement organizations.

PCN legitimacy was facilitated on the one hand through coercion and the prohibition of organized opposition, and on the other by the nationalist sentiments stirred up by the 1969 war with Honduras. The opening for acceptable political opposition and moderation toward labor during the 1960s provided the illusion of democratic progress. PCN governance continued a Salvadoran tradition of highly centralized administration, politically driven by the joint decision making bond between the military and the landed elite. PCN mayors discharged their functions in rural towns at the bottom of this hierarchy by providing surveillance on the rural work force to landowners, supervising small infrastructure projects and other public services. The municipal government is also responsible for collecting taxes, all of which is transferred to the national government, after which a small portion is returned.²³⁰ Politically appointed departmental governors exercised close supervision over mayors. In sum, the PCN preserved a top-down system of local rule that first and foremost acted to enforce rural order.

Under President Rivera and the direct authority of General José Alberto Chele Medrano, but with training from U.S. military trainers, the PCN formed ORDEN in the early 1960s as a paramilitary counter-revolutionary organization (Nairn 1984). ORDEN reportedly maintained overlapping membership with the UCS (Cabarrus 1983: 43). ORDEN functioned as a clientelist organization – offering the rural poor some chance of social mobility and economic security. Benefits included the right to carry a gun and an identification card – both of which constituted life insurance as death squad violence escalated. ORDEN members also received preferred consideration as tenants when land to rent became scarce and for job

²³⁰ Some of the local taxes include rental of market posts, commercial enterprises, public functions, slaughterhouse, cemetery, sanitation, water, sewerage, lighting and, at least in theory, land. Richard N. Adams (1957: 471-472) points out that municipal governments have declined in relative significance from the period in the late 19th century when they were the owners of large extensions of ejidal land.

opportunities as permanent laborers on farms or in public works projects. Having greater probability of ameliorating the effects of rural unemployment in the 1970s, ORDEN members represented many of those who became owners of Phase III land reform. In return, ORDEN members provided intelligence about organizing in rural communities and some collaborated in violence or intimidation against targeted individuals.

By the early 1970s, ORDEN was estimated to have 10,000 armed and organized militants, but also counted on a reserve force of as many as 100,000 occasional collaborators that also served in the *patrullas cantonales*.²³¹ The organization of ORDEN was a purely localist variety, with little exchange or linkage between village level chapters or among the broad membership. The idea was not to breed any sense of group empowerment, but rather, through a combination of selective benefits, extortion, and complicit participation in criminal violence, to ensure the political inoculation of a large segment of the rural population against the ideas of liberation theology or revolutionary challenge to the ruling elite.

Although more will be said in the sections that follow, the emergence of several competing revolutionary organizations also exposed rural populations to the urban based political leadership of these groups. In many cases, students from San Salvador were the first contacts with nascent rural insurgent groups. Although their numbers were few, the impact of revolutionary recruitment in regions such as the paracentral zone was significant. The FPL (1970) and ERP (1972) emerged as the first military organizations on the left, initiated by dissidents within the electorally focused Communist and Christian Democrat parties, respectively. All of the five revolutionary organizations emerged in part as a measure to protect nascent popular organizing. The mere existence of organized armed resistance, announced initially through graffiti, printed propaganda, and interventions with select *caporales* of the area fincas and haciendas, caught the attention of few outside the local zones of recruitment.²³² A wave of high profile kidnappings and sensational attacks on political

²³¹ The civil patrols consisted of ex-soldiers as reservists that lead weekly duties to assist the National Guard in maintaining order.

²³² *El Rebelde*, was the name of the local FPL publication and other broad political and economic analyses were being published under revolutionary organizational attribution. “*El Gran Impulso Neocolonial*” dated June, 1973 offers detailed critique of the Molina Five Year Plan, whose authorship the FPL places with the IDB, and outlines a recruitment strategy for a prolonged popular war.

targets, including the feared National Guard, stiffened the resistance of popular organizations and provoked the brutal retaliation of the security forces against the civilian population.

Insurgent organizing increased coordination between regions of the country as well as between countries. Some insurgent leaders returned to El Salvador with experience in the Sandinista insurgency. The FMLN also benefited from the participation, solidarity and coordination with combatants and supporters from various countries. This internationalization of the emerging conflict had both positive and negative implications for organizing, but undoubtedly transformed the parochial lifestyle of the rural community. While the FPL ultimately became the dominant revolutionary organization in the region, other FMLN factions (National Resistance (RN), the Revolutionary Central American Workers Party (PRTC), and the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) all had small bases as well. The politics of the revolutionary left was virulently competitive, which threw up many obstacles to coordination and more effective resistance, before, during and after the war. Problems associated with competition for hegemony within the revolutionary movement eventually forced the leadership of the respective organizations to hammer out a cooperation agreement that, in effect, had already been put into practice by commanders in the respective conflictive zones. This process of shaping a complex, national revolutionary political military organization, albeit with myriad deficiencies, created an organizational entity and sense of belonging that had never existed in El Salvador. This foundation of loyalty and principle, unique to the country's history, set the stage for the formation of the FMLN as the most significant opposition political party in the post-war period.

2. Religious Polarization

A deep divide in the Catholic Church emerged in the 1960s that had a profound impact on political mobilization and socio-economic change in San Vicente and the paracentral region. This section examines both in turn.

a. The Popular Church

In the early 1960s, a renovation movement was motivated by the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965), which initiated reforms in the practice of Catholicism, among those the establishment of the equality of laity, priests, and bishops. Initially this movement helped initiate pastoral *cursillos de Cristiandad* (Short Courses in Christianity) in the early 1960s, but like early experiments with agricultural cooperatives these reflection groups largely served a middle and upper class and urban audience, or were limited to the San Salvador archdiocese (Alas, 2000).

This reform process shifted gears with the Medellín Bishops Conference in 1968, which translated Vatican II for Latin America, and called on Latin American Catholic clergy and laity to adopt in the practice of their faith, “a preferential option for the poor.” At its core, the “new evangelization” involved a decentralization of the church’s authority and decision making that was considered essential for integrating the disenfranchised majority. The “popular church” gave new respect and attention to rural pastoral agents. The notion of sin ceased being exclusively a failure of individual morality, and began to focus on the failing of unjust societal structures. In turn, the Apostolate of Catholic Social Action encouraged solutions to societal problems that obligated the popular church to emphasize community building that was oriented by the poor themselves.

Cleary argues that this shift to bottom-up evangelization strategies cannot be overstated given the prior verticalist structures of the traditionalist church where most religious activity was channeled through brotherhoods or sodalities and cult worship. The author notes:

The main issue [before the Church] is political—not the worrisome problem of politicization, but internal politics: the emergence of the laity, empowering lay persons for positions of leadership. The greatest achievement of the Latin American church has been largely ignored: the church is empowering lay persons to a degree and extent unknown in most other parts of the world. The perform functions previously reserved to priests and they are creating new ministries within the church (Cleary 1985:125-126).

The focus of the emerging Liberation Theology movement was accelerated and intensified with the influx of new priests during this period, many with seminary training and exposure to new ideas in other Latin American countries (San Miguelito, Panama; Ecuador,

Cuernavaca, Mexico) and Europe.²³³ The establishment of the Central American University by the Jesuits in 1965 introduced a significant new impetus for major reforms and quickly associated the Jesuits with many of the most contentious local struggles.²³⁴

The progressive wing of the church responded by training peasant catechists and delegates of the word as community leaders and facilitating the analysis of prevailing conditions of social injustice within a network of bible study circles.²³⁵ Activist priests organized Christian Base Communities (Comunidades Eclesiasticas de Base – CEBs) to encourage the laity to act with more independence of the church hierarchy.

In El Salvador, a country almost entirely Catholic at the time, this space for Liberation Theology to prosper existed because there were simply too few priests. To offset the demand, foreign born priests were invited to El Salvador and a greater dependence on catechists was encouraged. One mission team from Cleveland, Ohio was invited by Bishop Lawrence Graziano to join the diocese of San Miguel.²³⁶ A team arrived in La Union in March, 1965 and after about a year invited some 25 communities in their parish to select 3-5 individuals who

²³³ Andrew Stein, in a meticulous study of the attitudes of church leaders in Nicaragua, illustrates the significance of this influx on the receptivity and enthusiasm to implement the perceived mandate of Vatican II and Medellín. This commitment was most visible in the two generations of priests ordained between 1966-1979 and 1980-1989. Consequently, it was significantly lower in prior and subsequent generations. See Stein (1995) Chapter 3: Pastoral Work, Views of Church Authority, and the Role of The Laity: Is the “Preferential Option for the Poor” actually being implemented?”

²³⁴ See Charles J. Bierne, S.J. “Murder in the University: Jesuit Education and Social Change in El Salvador. Unpublished Manuscript, Feb. 15, 1994, (chapter 5). Within the Jesuit community, Bierne distinguishes between the “gradualists” and the “liberationists.” During its first decade, the UCA was oriented for the most part by the gradualist tendency. However, the combination of greater economic stability, ironically provided by two loans negotiated under President Molina’s approval with the IDB (\$2 million and \$10 million), with growing repression of liberationists, steadily tilted the UCA’s work toward the views of Ignacio Ellacuría and the goals and methods of the latter ideology.

²³⁵ According to Berryman (1984:108) some 10 urban and 27 rural base communities were established, with over 300 catechists, 15,000 lay peasants trained at the peasant vocational schools.

²³⁶ Based on an interview with Dennis St. Marie, and “Mission to Latin America: A Progress Report,” prepared by the Staff of the Cleveland Latin American Mission, July 28, 1969; and John D. King and Timothy W. Gareau, “An Historical Overview of the Mission of the Diocese of Cleveland in El Salvador,” St. Mary Seminary, Cleveland, Ohio, March 25, 1987. Between 1965 and 1999, the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland and Youngstown sent 65 missionaries to staff operations in Chirilagua, San Miguel and La Libertad. Included were Sisters Maura Clark and Ita Ford, and layworkers, Dorothy Kazel, Jean Donovan, who were killed by the Salvadoran National Guard in La Paz, on Dec. 3, 1981. Other priests from the Cleveland team were expelled in the 1970s.

would volunteer to undergo rigorous liturgical training over the next two years.²³⁷ The principal motivation early on was to ease the burden of providing the sacraments and religious education for some 650,000 faithful in a parish with fewer than 20 priests.

The Cleveland mission was instrumental in establishing the first rural training center for catechists in the diocese, the Queen of Peace – El *Castaño* Center, in Chirilagua, San Miguel, in 1968. The initial success of El *Castaño* led to the formation of six other centers (*Los Naranjos*, Jiquilisco; *Centro San Lucas*, San Miguel; *Escuela Agrícola Monseñor Luís Chávez y González*, Suchitoto; *CEPROR*, Santa Tecla, *Domos Maria*, Mejicanos, and *La Divina Providencia*, Santa Ana). Peasant catechist training centers were established to train lay leaders to deepen the role of the church in community struggles and redistribute the ecclesiastic load on the Salvadoran priests in the region. Participants were carefully selected by the communities and clergy based on their potential to return to their communities and extend the reach of the church. In addition to liturgical training, early training at the centers emphasized leadership skills, vocational education, health and family planning.

Fr. Denis St. Marie, member of the first Cleveland mission team and co-founder of El *Castaño*, considers these peasant training centers the finest pastoral work that he or perhaps any part of the Catholic church had achieved in Latin America during the period. Catechists were provided some incentives to attend relatively long and intensive training sessions.²³⁸ At least in the early years, the centers also benefited from U.S. food aid for work programs, administered by Caritas and Catholic Relief Services, instruction by government agronomists, teachers and public health specialists, as well as the Red Cross.²³⁹ These alliances were conditional on the early paternalist style of pastoral outreach reflected in the primary focus on evangelization.

²³⁷ In 1967, 100 Salvadoran men began religious training and 65 finished this initial course in 1968. The initial team included Clevelanders Fr. Thomas Sebian, Fr. William Gibbons, Sister Martha Fox, Sister Alice Brickman, Fr. Michael Scheid, Sister Ann Schaefer, Sister Marie Baltrinic, Fr. Norbert Hannibal, Sister Francisca Theil, Sister Janet Kearns, Fr. Patrick McGuckin, and Rosemary Smith.

²³⁸ Initial participants at El *Castaño* were provided a day's wage (about \$1) for lost income. Training commitments in the first year were to attend the school one week of every four over the course of a year. Interview, Dennis St. Marie, 1999; Binford has noted that later on, the centers paid for the transportation costs as well as food and housing, but did not provide monetary subsidies.

²³⁹ Operational costs for El *Castaño* were estimated in 1969 at \$1000 per month, covered by private donations. Mission, pg. 10.

Initial efforts to work within the prevailing order were so successful, that conservative bishops encouraged parish priests to ensure catechist participation.²⁴⁰

Peasant leaders from the paracentral region were selected to attend the *Los Naranjos*, *El Castaño*, and *San Lucas* based on their piety and leadership potential. Binford suggests that many of the catechists that originated from Northern Morazán did not come from the poorest families. In San Vicente, the ranks of catechists were recruited from both landless and landed peasant households.

The curriculum at the centers eventually became more political. David Rodríguez led discussions on the “national reality” of the country, based on a popular education text entitled, “*Conozcando Nuestra Realidad*” (Understanding Our Reality). By introducing a social and historical critique of the Salvadoran reality, with particular emphasis on the rural economy, participants were exposed not only to the magnitude of inequality and injustice that prevailed around their own communities, but to remedies that have been employed in similar contexts by others.

This combination of skill enhancement and political instruction contributed to what many participants described as an experience of conversion or awakening, as well as becoming the source of greatest agitation among the church hierarchy. Fr. St. Marie insisted that pastoral training at the centers did not encourage political reform, nor openly endorse the movements seeking more far reaching change in the country. Still, the centers became associated, correctly or not, with training insurgents. Disagreeing with the politicization of the Center’s training, then bishop of the diocese of Santiago de Maria, Oscar Romero, closed *Los Naranjos* in 1975 for a year. *El Castaño* was eventually targeted by the Romero government (no family relation with the Archbishop) as a subversive organization, raided by the military and finally closed in 1980.

A review by the Cleveland Diocese of their mission experience felt compelled to clarify the matter.

²⁴⁰ Early references to promotion of local artisans, food for work infrastructure projects, literacy and hygiene efforts, well-minded as they might have been, replicate some of the miscalculated development thinking that prevails today which dooms the chances of survival for such depoliticized development efforts.

With persistent accusations that the Church of El Salvador has been involved in Communist activity, a sensitive yet legitimate question may be addressed as to the actual involvement of the mission in communist activity. According to team members, such involvement was “minimal” and involved infiltration of communist activists into local base communities and groups, and not any activity on the part of the missionaries themselves. The team has said that they were, at times, “duped” by not detecting and expelling soon enough those who were infiltrating and exploiting local religious communities for political purposes. (King and Gareau 1987: 15).

Increasingly put on the defensive in the face of allegations by reactionary clergy and the government, the experience of the Cleveland mission, as accounted for by their own testimony, is reticent regarding the links between the training centers and political partisanship.²⁴¹ Other CEB parishes were less circumspect. For many, the religious conversion that occurred in the CEB movements led to the politicization of this process in a way that was inevitable, organic and stimulated by a widely held demand for the church to accompany poor communities in their own liberation (Cabarrus 1983; CONFRES 1978; Richard and Melendez 1982; Lernoux 1982; Wright 1990; Peterson 1997). Many priests, nuns and bishops themselves were not immune to the conversion process nor to the consequences of this decision, no more clearly illustrated than the transformation of archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero.²⁴²

In San Vicente, the strength of the CEB movement may be attributed to the critical mass of Liberation Theology priests in the region. Thirteen of the reputed “group of 30” radical priests in the Salvadoran Catholic clergy were based in San Vicente.²⁴³ Conservative elements of the San Vicente and adjacent dioceses (San Miguel, La Paz) sided with the landowning class and the military in their hostility toward an escalating insurgency. Of the country’s seven

²⁴¹ King and Gareau go as far as to suggest that the church was equally victimized by the both the FMLN and the military, grossly exaggerating what is now known to be a pattern of terror for which the latter is almost entirely responsible.

²⁴² The story of Romero’s conversion from politically conservative at the time of his installation in November 1977 to the profound commitment he held for the individuals and organizations that led the social movement challenge to the oligarchy and military governments is told poignantly in numerous books, including Lopez Vigil (1995).

²⁴³ While the number of “liberationist” clergy and religious women exceeded this estimate, the “group of 30” designation was coined by Bishop Freddy Delgado (1983), representative voice of the reactionary church and ally of the death squad organizations led by Roberto D’Aubuisson in the 1970s that directly targeted these priests. See “La Iglesia Popular Nacio en El Salvador: Memorias de 1972 – 1982.” Mimeo. The names of San Vicente diocesan priests at the time David Rodríguez, Benigno Rodríguez, Rafael Barahona, Alirio Napoleón Macías, Cosme Spezzoto, Trinidad de Jesus Nieto, Porfirio Martínez, Vicente Sibrian, Rafael Palacios, Miguel Alipio Flores, Hernan Rodríguez and Francisco Mejía.

bishops, five opposed the liberationist pastoral approach and of these San Vicente's bishop, Pedro Arnoldo Aparicio y Quintanilla, became the most conservative and reactionary. Aparicio was the founder and principal organizer of the *Caballeros de Cristo Rey* (Knights of Christ the King), which combined militant allegiance to the traditional church with anti-communism. While Bishop Aparicio encouraged the education and early enthusiasm of the young priests to implement Vatican II, this space closed quickly by the mid-1970s. Eventually, pushed in the opposite direction by the same social forces that led to the radicalization of then Archbishop Oscar Romero, Aparicio would come to personify the extreme anti-communist voice within the church. The San Vicente diocese was perhaps the most divided between hard-line anti-communist supporters of the oligarchy and liberation theologians.

David Rodríguez epitomized the class of church leaders that Bishop Aparicio would come to condemn and the government would target for expulsion, torture or assassination. Born to a middle class farm family in Apastepeque, San Vicente, Rodríguez was raised in a typically rural religious household. His father was a devout leader of the *Caballeros de Cristo Rey*, and he along with a brother and sister received formal pastoral training. After extended studies in canon law in Spain and Mexico, Rodríguez was ordained and began his service as young priest in 1967. Benigno Rodríguez, David's brother, would also be ordained and serve as a priest in several towns in San Vicente and Cabañas. David Rodríguez was assigned to the parish of Tecoluca in May 1969, continuing the progressive pastoral work of Rafael Palacios.²⁴⁴ Soon after his arrival, Dr. Rafael Antonio Carballo, owner of several large estates, invited Rodríguez to give a mass for the January 15th Esquipulas celebration.²⁴⁵ Carballo was one of Tecoluca's wealthiest *patronos*. One source estimated that prior to the war, the family headed by Carballo, then the Minister of Justice for the Molina government, owned well over 5,000 hectares in central sector of Tecoluca.²⁴⁶

Impressed by the young priest, Carballo invited Rodríguez to give a monthly mass on the hacienda, and would pay \$200 for each one. All religious services were regulated by the

²⁴⁴ Palacios was killed on June 20, 1979 in Santa Tecla – one of 3 diocesan priests that were assassinated. He was related to Rebeca Palacios (Lorena Peña), one of the first female FPL and top FMLN commanders.

²⁴⁵ In addition to the Hacienda Santa Teresa, Carballo owned several other large haciendas, including El Casino and La Burrera that extended from the central region to the coast.

²⁴⁶ Interview, Pablo Parada Andino, Tecoluca,

bishop, which served as a sort of tax base for the church. In 1970, a visit to the community cost \$25, a baptism \$2, a marriage \$10, a prayer for a deceased relative \$5, although if the prayer was sung it cost \$25. Masses for village patron feasts were also expensive, the priest often charged between \$100 and \$250, which was either collected by the community or paid by the landowner. The church also rented lands to various villages where local male religious leaders, Knights of Christ the King, would organize men to grow corn and beans for the church. This priest would visit the communities, not so much to talk with the people, but to monitor production, encouraging poor farmers to give the best part of their harvest as a donation to the church, and shaming those who hadn't fulfilled his expectations.²⁴⁷

After three visits, Rodríguez was approached by peasants from *Cantón El Regadío*, at the margins of the land now fenced off for cattle and cotton by Carballo. They asked the priest to intervene on their behalf with the owner. Carballo had cut off the community's access to water and the road. The recently installed fencing had forced them to detour for several miles when walking to work and had monopolized the use of the stream which had dried up in their community. When Rodríguez conveyed the appeal to Carballo, the owner responded in a condescending but threatening tone, 'you're a young priest, don't be stupid getting mixed up in these things'. David refused to continue giving masses on the hacienda, but continued saying mass for the workers without charge. This first confrontation rippled throughout the parish and emboldened peasant and landowner alike by the perception that the moral standing of the church on political questions relevant to the parish was shifting. Similar confrontations with several other notorious landlords in the parish served as early signals to him of expectations of subservience that the landed elite held for the church in maintaining rural order.

Like other priests in the region, Rodríguez began introducing changes to the relationship between the church and peasant. This began with ending the practice of fixed charges for services, offering many services for free, or allowing people to pay what they could. The typical hierarchical relationship between priest and peasant was also transformed. Greater authority was delegated to local catechists in the first *Plan Parroquial* in 1971, which decentralized many of the tasks and decisions surrounding evangelization to the laity.

As an extension of the *Plan Parroquial*, hundreds of local peasant men and women were selected by their communities to attend *cursillos* at the rural training centers. *Los*

²⁴⁷ Interview, David Rodríguez, San Salvador, 1998

Naranjos, one of the peasant training schools located in neighboring Jiquilisco, was widely recognized as having had a deep impact on the collective consciousness of the rural Christian community, a fact made more ironic by the initially rather conservative pedagogical intentions of these centers.²⁴⁸ Binford provides a vivid description of the methodology used at the centers to unsettle and shape latent sensibilities and develop leadership qualities in the participants (Binford 2004). Linking biblical themes to everyday life was central to this leadership training, resulting in priests, catechists and many of the faithful taking more active roles in solving community problems. Catechists would return to the base communities and lead the bible circles in discussing national issues and analyzing local problems, looking for solutions in scripture, and reflecting on how one should act as a Christian when faced with these problems. A space was opened for people to learn to speak publicly and be heard for the first time. Poverty, landlessness and injustice became problems to be solved, rather than the intractable will of God.

The CEB experience also instilled the practice of coordination. Tecoluca's parish council was divided up into 10 sub-regions, and each catechist on the council had intimate ties to the bible study circles within each community in their respective sub-region. Bible study circles met every Sunday. Some 30-40 catechists in the parish met the first Saturday of every month. Tecoluca trained as many as 400 delegates of the word, who in turn conducted much of the pastoral organizing work. Every 15 days, community leaders from various biblical circles met. Larger meetings of the parish were convened through announcements conveyed by word of mouth. In the early 1970s, Tecoluca was viewed as one the most organized parishes in the country.²⁴⁹ Lacking telephones, a postal system, and in many places, roads, the word of mouth messenger communication network of parish leaders throughout the region facilitated meetings with uncanny effectiveness.²⁵⁰

Moreover, local catechists often participated in exchanges with their peers and priests in other regions of the country or began participating in larger protests in San Vicente or San

²⁴⁸ Interview, Dennis St. Marie, Cleveland, July 21, 1999.

²⁴⁹ Other documented parish organizing efforts included Aguilares (Cabarrus), Suchitoto and Guazapa (Alas).

²⁵⁰ Interview, Miriam Abrego, San Carlos Lempa, 1998

Salvador. These regional encounters not only instilled a deeper sense of solidarity between local experiences being waged by leaders of the popular church, but they permitted a level of coordination and awareness that worked against parochial tendencies within rural communities and the verticalist tendencies within the traditional church that would endure during the war. These links with other parishes outside the region were crucial for sharing information and monitoring government and landowner responses to local organizing efforts, particularly in relation to addressing security threats and developing effective community self-defense measures. Describing these linkages between El *Castaño* and Northern Morazán, Binford describes how peasant catechists became the “organic intellectuals” of the revolutionary movement. Invited into a space that awakened a sense of their own capacity to change the present conditions of poverty and landlessness, these catechists carried this message to every corner of their rural communities.

The training provided at the *centros de formación campesino* challenged the ideology and icons of traditional Catholicism espoused by bishop Aparicio, who regularly ended his masses with appeals for the salvation of lost Communist souls in China and the Soviet Union. For Aparicio and like-minded priests such as Father Platero in Guadalupe, collective solutions were acceptable as long as they were limited to self-help projects and did not transgress the lines of rural authority. Aparicio encouraged vigilance against communist infiltration by arming the ranks of *Caballeros de Cristo Rey* with clubs.

Of course, many of the first initiatives did begin with self-help projects. Youth groups were organized to make collections toward construction and equipping of small chapels in the villages. However, the completion of the chapel was only the first stage of achievement, after which the bond of mutual support was then steered toward applying experience to resolving more complex local and national problems and tracing the region’s history. Many recalled the significance of music and theater in this period, beginning with church’s assistance. One combatant recalled these beginnings:

I was born in San Francisco Angulo and I had barely gotten to sixth grade with the help of my professor. We were eleven in my family, nine brothers and two sisters. My father lived by working as a day laborer and from the time I was seven until I was fourteen, I worked with him during the harvest picking cotton. My father loved music and we formed our own group. We were invited to play at the patron feasts to raise money. In 1968, David Rodríguez was young and dynamic priest and he taught me to play the guitar. He helped raise funds with raffles to buy instruments and organize our musical group. (Carlos Espinoza, FMLN ex-combatant, Las Pampas, Tecoluca, Dec. 18, 1998)

Local musical talents were slowly oriented from ecclesiastic songs to more *cantos de liberación*, eventually playing a fundamental role in raising consciousness among the semi-literate and even more central functions in the celebrations of achievements to follow. This popular culture of resistance, like much of the CEB legacy and unlike most development assistance in El Salvador up to that date, was built on a quite conservative, and at times paternalistic foundation of self-help initiatives that were then permitted to explore beyond these limits.²⁵¹

Religion and politics were inextricably linked in the parish of Tecoluca. For example, one aspect of pastoral training was voter education. Parishioners were prepared to participate in the 1972 elections, but the fraud and violence that enabled Col. Arnoldo Arturo Molina to become president, also imposed a PCN mayor, Atilio Cañas, despite the widespread belief that the Christian Democratic candidate had clearly won.

In 1973, President Molina announced that he would visit Tecoluca as part of his *Gobierno Móvil* program to inaugurate a public works project and requested that church leaders be present to deliver welcoming remarks at the ceremony. David Rodríguez discussed the invitation with the catechists and within many local communities. Angry with the 1972 electoral fraud, the majority decided that Rodríguez would not support the visit by withholding his presence from the event. Bishop Aparicio reacted by transferring Rodríguez to the parish of Olocuiltla, about 30 km to the west of Tecoluca. After further reflection, the parish of Tecoluca decided to protest the Bishop's decision and as many as 10,000 parishioners marched to the Cathedral in San Vicente - the first overt demonstration of its kind in the region. A second larger march occupied the San Vicente cathedral and confronted the bishop.²⁵² Rodríguez eventually reached an informal agreement with his replacement, Rafael Barahona, to remain in the parish, divide it half, and share the pastoral duties. These protests and their perceived success built local self-confidence in parish's capacity for collective action, but had national repercussions that called the attention of authorities to Tecoluca.

²⁵¹ Interview Alicia Clímaco, San Carlos Lempa, Dec. 7, 1998. See also Foran (1993, 1997) for the concept of political culture of resistance and Almeida et. al (1999) for specific analysis of FMLN popular music in framing the conflict.

²⁵² Interviews, David Rodriguez, June, 1998, Nicolás García, April 16, 1999 and Pablo Anaya, May 1998.

As objective conditions for peasants deteriorated, the influence of young, activist Catholic priests in parishes like Tecoluca, awakened an indignation and moral self-confidence to challenge existing problems. A fundamental element to the success of the CEB movement was the space and leadership to permit collective decision making. The church promoted the early formation of agricultural and savings and loan cooperatives. Under the guidance of Rodríguez and Barahona, TECOOP, the savings and loan cooperative, was founded by 20 Caballeros de Cristo Rey in 1970. Membership reportedly reached 900 before the repression forced it to close. Other similar initiatives were blocked by the changing reaction to local religious movements.

b. The Reactionary Church

Many communities were unreceptive to the CEB influence, but were equally devout and activist Christians. Liberation theology was countered by reactionary clergy and suspicious catechists. Communities were divided and many CEBs were neighbors with both traditional religious communities and reactionary paramilitary strongholds. It is worth remembering that progressive Catholicism represented a minority position within the church. Perhaps 30-45 prelates out of a total clergy that numbered 437 by 1978 openly sympathized with the methodology of Liberation Theology.²⁵³ The landed elite maintained close ties to powerful bishops and the papal nuncio who spearheaded the opposition to the liberationist priests and practices.

Juan Platero, a Jesuit, who served over 50 years as priest, was beloved in his parish of Guadalupe. His influence in the Jiboa Valley in favor of the prevailing rural order may have been equal to that of any of the progressive clergy in the region. Some attribute Platero's conservative views to the fact that his brother was a paymaster on the nearby fincas of Alfredo Cristiani. He prophesized the violence that would engulf the region and counseled parishioners to trust in God's plan for them, not to question it, and therefore, not to get mixed up in politics. Civil patrollers in the *cabecera* of Guadalupe and in San Emigdio, one of the

²⁵³ Delgado estimates that 20% of the clergy was committed to the Popular church. Another indicator of overall support might be the letter to the Pope in 1978 signed by some 300 priests, nuns and laity requesting clarification by Rome on their support for Liberation Theology and its practice in El Salvador.

town's principal *cantónes*, recalled how Platero's homilies would provide spiritual reinforcement for wavering obligations to serve in defense of the town.²⁵⁴

References to the peasant training centers and CEBs were notably absent from interviews with peasants in the Jiboa Valley. One catechist that was trained by Platero from Agua Agria, a *cantón* of Guadalupe, knew little of the peasant training schools.

We grew sugar cane in the valley and I remember the organizing pitch (*terapias*) of 'agitators' in the San Pedro Agua Calientes. They asked me about the price that I received for my harvest and explained how the poor were being cheated. But I worked as a driver for Cristiani and as a civil defense volunteer. I saw the violence, the bodies. As attacks by the FMLN intensified, I decided to join the Armed Forces so that if I was killed, at least my family would receive a pension. (Interview, Agua Agria, Guadalupe, Aug. 3, 1998)

Maintaining such close commercial ties with San Vicente, the influence of bishop Aparicio throughout the valley was also widely acknowledged. In San Cayetano, accounts suggested that loyalty to Aparicio effectively silenced the local clergy.²⁵⁵ The church was viewed as indifferent to the escalating violence when events unraveled and institutional support could have shifted the balance.

The impact of Aparicio in the Jiboa Valley cannot be overstated. He was appointed bishop of the San Vicente diocese in 1948, and served until his retirement in 1983. In his public pastoral statements and from the pulpit, Aparicio spoke passionately and eloquently in opposition to the "intolerable social injustice" and the imperative of implementing Vatican II. Yet, his pronouncements were intentionally vague regarding the correct interpretation of the mandate of Medellín and the appropriate CEB methodology. He was Machiavellian in his castigation of priests who had deviated from their pastoral mission into politics, while at the same time railing in general terms about the lack of adequate social or economic development to address growing unrest.²⁵⁶

During the 1970s, reacting to growing local pressure from liberationist parishes, Aparicio increasingly hardened his public position. In public, a concerned and sympathetic

²⁵⁴ Interviews, catechists, El Chile, San Juan Nonualco; Guadalupe, July, 1998

²⁵⁵ Interview, Napoleon Orantes, San Cayetano Istepeque, Dec. 1998.

²⁵⁶ "Denunciation of the Grave Social Situation that El Salvador is Enduring," by Aparicio on June 29, 1971 – the 25th anniversary of his appointment as bishop.

script regarding rural injustice was maintained, while in private Aparicio, who Tecolucans referred to as *tamagás* (a lethal snake that inhabits the mangrove region), scolded the victims of massacres for overstepping their place and withheld support to parish priests targeted by death squads or security forces. Despite increasing pleas for protection after death threats, Aparicio ignored them.

The voice of the traditional church served as an effective moral shield against the growing international clamor against human rights violations in El Salvador. In Puebla (1979) at the hemispheric meeting of Catholic clergy, Aparicio disputed claims that the church was being persecuted. Another example is the citation of Aparicio's public condemnation of priests that have misinterpreted the meaning of liberation theology that were prominently cited in government rebuttals to highly critical reports submitted to the OAS in the late 1970s.

"The priests and nuns who operate educational centers and parochial communities must refrain from any direct or indirect collaboration with the [peasant organizations] FECCAS and the UTC and with any other similar organization whose activities are conducted in the strictly political field (the taking of power) and because, moreover, they are leftist organizations."²⁵⁷ For Aparicio and the reactionary church, communism (leftism) had ceased being an "illusionary pretext for intimidating peasants" and had become a sin. According to Aparicio, renegade priests had succumbed to the temptation to reduce "salvation to material well-being and church activity to a political endeavor." This, in the view of the reactionary bishops, absolved the church of any legitimate obligation to protect them or those foolish enough to follow them.

Benigno Rodríguez and other progressive priests did have some impact in starting several CEB communities in the Jiboa Valley, particularly *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*, a cantón of Verapáz. However, progressive Catholic mobilization did not take root. Benjamin Molina, who owns four sugar cane mills and was a former *Caballero de Cristo Rey* recalled being invited by Benigno Rodríguez along with other local lay leaders to a 10 day workshop in

²⁵⁷ Report on the Situation of Human Rights in El Salvador, Sidney Mazzini Villacorta, Ambassador for El Salvador to the OAS, Feb. 26, 1979. (<http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/ElSalvador78eng/observations.htm>), acquired 2/25/05, citing statement given in San Salvador, August 28, 1978. by Pedro Arnoldo Aparicio y Quintanilla, Bishop of San Vicente, president of the Bishop's Conference, Benjamin Barrera y Reyes, Bishop of Santa Ana, José Eduardo Alvarez, Bishop of San Miguel, Chaplain General; Marco René Revelo, Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador; Freddy Delgado A., Secretary General of the CEDES.

Zacatecoluca in the late 1970s. He remembers that the majority of the catechists invited from Jiboa Valley communities were uncomfortable or alienated by the discussion led by David and Benigno Rodríguez, Cosme Spezzoto, Marcial Serrano and Alirio Napoleon Macias. These discussions, according to Mejía, began with biblical lectures but deviated into discussions about “subversion.” He disagreed at the time but maintained his silence. Nevertheless, he attributes his lack of enthusiasm for the “radical theology” to being labeled as an informant and eventual kidnapping by the FMLN.²⁵⁸

In *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*, a small number of catechists were connected with Chenchó Alas in Suchitoto and Benigno and David Rodríguez, as well as urban contacts in the revolutionary movement. However, Ramiro Valladares, the priest who succeeded Rodríguez in Verapáz and extended family of FMLN commander, Marta Valladares (also known as Nidia Díaz), was sympathetic to the opposition but reluctant to actively promote CEB organizing.²⁵⁹

Beginning in the mid 1970s, catechists in *Aguas Calientes* began working clandestinely to organize base communities and build support for challenging unfair working conditions on the fincas. Yet, the families in and around *Aguas Calientes* were divided with regard to the progressive and conservative currents within the church. The divisions coincided to some degree with smallholding and landless households. According to one account, most of the civil patrol chiefs in the community were landowners, some of whom actively collaborated with the National Guard to identify opposition leaders. Communal and political organizing centered on the landless laborer and renter population.²⁶⁰

The indiscriminate repression by the National Guard that drove all families from *Aguas Calientes* in 1980 left most with memories of bitter resentment and distrust. The legacy of the efforts to introduce Christian base communities, as perceived in many communities of the Jiboa Valley, was one of unnecessary and tragic disruption of a relatively peaceful co-existence with

²⁵⁸ Interview, 7/17/1998, Verapáz. Molina employed 30 peones when his milling operations were at full capacity. His son was executed by the FMLN as a suspected informant. He was kidnapped by FMLN combatants who were also his former employees

²⁵⁹ Fr. Valladares was later captured and tortured by the military.

²⁶⁰ Interview, Sofia Marroquín de Hernández, Human Rights Center – Madeline Legadec, a former catechist and organizer in *Aguas Calientes*. Some the families of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* with members on both sides of the struggle included the Mira, Dimas, Campos, Sanchez, Hernandez, and Portillo. Similar accounts of families with combatants on both sides were noted in the cabecera of Verapáz.

the large landowners. Many are angry that the entire community had to be punished for the mistakes of a few – underscoring the conformism and resignation that characterized the traditional Catholicism’s relation to the rural poor.

The impact of the CEB movement was also considerably less in San Ildefonso. Opposition communities were aware of the base community work, but liberation theology failed to penetrate the rural communities of San Ildefonso. References to CEB organizing or catechist training simply did not take prominence in the local reconstruction of history. On the other hand, residents of the *cabecera* reported hostility to the occasional homilies of progressive priests. Parishioners cited their defiance of the “*terapias*” of Benigno Rodríguez by staging walkouts of his sermons. Traditional patron feasts organized during the war were perceived by the organizers as acts of protest against the influence of FMLN.²⁶¹

Life here before the war was quiet, peaceful. We didn’t have problems. Because of the actions of a few the entire cantón was falsely tied to the subversives. I was arrested and threatened and my brother was killed, only because of his involvement. We all fled in 1980. I went to Cojutepeque, then to Guatemala. In 1983, I was one of the first of two families to repopulate the village after the mayor gave permission. In 1985, others followed. (Jesus Mira, *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*, July 1998).

Figure 4.4 summarizes the key opportunity structure attributes discussed to this point. Agrarian inequality is high in each case, although the greater presence of export crops in Tecoluca and the Jiboa Valley reflect a more hard-line cosmopolitan elite, compared to the provincial elite that is dominant in San Ildefonso. It follows that the rupture in peasant-landlord relations has been most abrupt in Tecoluca, least so in San Ildefonso and cushioned in the Jiboa Valley only by the larger relative presence of smallholders. Rural demand making has escalated in Tecoluca, is resigned to the status quo in the Jiboa Valley and moderated by the hopes of land reform in San Ildefonso.

The landholding elite in all three cases exercise ties to allies in the major political parties and the military. The provincial elites in San Ildefonso have stronger relative influence with the Christian Democrats, (as illustrated by the rising status of peasant leaders such as Orlando Arevalo). Hard-liners in both Tecoluca and the Jiboa Valley count on significant influence in the PCN and the paramilitary

²⁶¹ Interview, Porfirio Martínez, *sindico* and resident of the *cabecera* of San Ildefonso, 5/22/98

	Tecoluca	Jiboa Valley	San Ildefonso
Pre-war Agrarian Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton, Cattle and corn • Rupture of colonato and high landlessness • Odious cosmopolitan Elites and high inequality • Escalating demands for agrarian transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee, sugar and corn • Buffer effect on growing insecurity by smallholding peasant class • Odious, but feared cosmopolitan elites and high inequality • Resignation toward status quo agrarian relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited export crops Cattle • Loss of prime land to hydroelectric reservoir resolved in part through elite brokered compromise • Provincial elites, both odious and respected, with moderate inequality • Preferences divided between restored patron-client social contract and modest agrarian reform
Composition and Clout of Landed Elites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronghold of agrarian hardliners • Ties to PCN Executive • Ties to active Military • PDC reformers in 1969 • Angulo family as an example of landowner concession in the face of organized resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronghold of agrarian hardliners • Ties to ARENA and paramilitary leaders • Cristiani example of intransigent landowner hegemony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak ties to PCN and strong ties PDC party • Non-violent peasant social mobility • Noboa & Aguilúz, examples of good and bad bosses led to peasant ambivalence.
Access to Social Movement or Revolutionary Elites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPL concentration zone • UTC – BPR focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few PRTC /RN ties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRTC expansion zone
Access to Religious Elites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enduring and widespread influence Progressive Church clergy • Ties to National CEB network leaders • Extensive exchange with Los Naranjos and El Castaño schools • Parish Plan Unity • Oppositional access to Reactionary church leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanket influence of Reactionary Church leadership (Aparicio) and local clergy • Targeted & temporary influence of Progressive church clergy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truncated and late exposure to Progressive Church clergy from neighboring parishes. • Pastoral organizing resisted by provincial elites

Figure 4.4 Summary of Key Case Study Opportunity Structure Attributes

movement that would become ARENA. Social movement organizational presence is deepest in Tecoluca, with ties and cooperation extended to the national leadership of all relevant organizations. While not nearly as pervasive, paramilitary influence is dominant over fragmented revolutionary organizing efforts in the Jiboa Valley. San Ildefonso represents an expansion zone for both sides.

Finally, Tecoluca enjoyed strong ties to the progressive Catholic church until 1977 when the leadership of this movement was decapitated. Nevertheless, Tecoluca's internal unity and a broad array of linkages to national religious networks were consolidated through the implementation of the 1970 Parish Plan under the guidance of David Rodríguez, Rafael Barahona and a constant rotation of catechists trained in Los Naranjos and El Castaño. The Jiboa Valley is much closer politically to the reactionary church leadership under Bishop Aparicio, which has contained the germ of Christian Base Community organizing. In San Ildefonso, the influence of liberation theology arrived late or indirectly, never really contesting the predominant conservative influence of the local laity.

E. THE INEVITABLE BECOMES INTOLERABLE – REPRESSION AND TURNING POINTS IN PRE-WAR POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

When the few brief spaces for political organizing have opened in El Salvador, opposition organizations on the left have mobilized rapidly only to have that space clamped shut. The political space opened from above by dissident political and religious elites in the early 1960s was also closed by the mid 1970s. The precise turning point varies for the case study municipalities, but as for most of the country, it hinges on specific events. For most, these events involve a violent act intended to suffocate popular organizing efforts. For each case study community, the three catalysts (agrarian inequality, elite access and repression) converged in a crucial political moment that was decisive in terms of the choice of historical paths.

1. Case One - *La Cayetana*:

For Tecoluca and many in surrounding communities, this event occurred on Nov. 29, 1974 in *La Cayetana*, a hamlet which formally belongs to the *cantón* León de Piedra, San Vicente. On that day, six men were massacred and 18 others were imprisoned and tortured by the National Guard and Police after a confrontation between residents of the village of *La Cayetana* and local landowner, Coralía Angulo, over the right to farm the Angulo's land. Nine of those taken from the community were later killed. The dispute began in 1973 when Angulo rented her land to a cotton grower instead of to local *colonos*. The massacre is recognized as a turning point in revolutionary organizing in Tecoluca and had major impacts in other parts of El Salvador.

La Cayetana was a community situated on land owned by the Angulo family. The Angulos were at one time, owners of the entire Southern half of the volcano and adjacent coastal plains that extended into La Paz and stretched to the sea. Pablo Anaya, former *colono* and resident of *La Cayetana* at the time, claimed that the Angulos had accumulated all of this land until the 1930-40's, before sub-dividing the estate and distributing parts of it to their children (Julia, Roberto, Coralía, Vicki, etc.) and selling parts to others. Moreover, in Usulután, the Hacienda Nancuchiname was originally a property of the Angulo's before they sold it to the Dueñas family. Through these land transactions, the Angulos were networked with the largest landowning families in the region. Their holdings were so extensive that they included cattle, near the hacienda household center (Hacienda Tehuacan Opico), indigo, sugar cane, coffee (Haciendas Peña, Barrios, La Paz) and cotton (Paz Opico), in addition to basic grains that were grown in part by the *colono* labor force.

a. Life in pre-war *La Cayetana*.

Pablo Anaya was born in 1940 and his parents lived in the community and worked as *colonos* for the Angulos for as long as he can remember. *La Cayetana* consisted of about 80 families, perhaps as many as 500 people. The house of Pablo's family was located just below a plateau extension of the Angulo family land called Hacienda Paz Opico. As *colonos*, Pablo's family did not own their own land, but were allocated a small spot for the house, and provided a small

garden plot to grow corn and beans, and raise a few animals. In return, his parents had to give half of the harvest to the Angulos, and in addition to provide labor for planting and harvesting crops on the hacienda. His father worked for some time in the processing of indigo, an unpleasant job. Wages were 1.25 *colones* a day (\$0.25), even though the legal minimum wage was 2.25 *colones* (\$0.45). The food during the work day consisted of a tortilla in the morning, two more at lunch and some beans. The beans were typically cooked on Monday, but were served all week long, and so they often accumulated roaches, or rats.

By contrast, the Angulos were conspicuously wealthy by area standards, with a *trapiche* to process sugar and añil, near the Hacienda Tehuacan Opico and a swimming pool. The economic power of the Angulos had translated into political domination of the region for most of the 20th century. General Nicolás Angulo, owner of the 1,800 hectare Hacienda Ramirez, was appointed to a number of high ranking posts in the government of President Fernando Figueroa (1907-1911), including Secretary of State.²⁶² Luis Raúl Angulo (1912), Felipe Angulo (1915) and Gonzalo Angulo (1931), all doctors, were congressional deputies from San Vicente and awarded prestigious recognition as physicians by their peers in the Assembly.

Ernesto Angulo Sr., a cousin living in Santa Tecla, was one of Roberto D'Aubuisson's closest confidants, founder of the ARENA party and eventual congressional deputy.²⁶³ Ernesto Angulo Milla, the son, would become ARENA deputy in the 1990s. Luís Roberto Angulo Samayoa would become President of the National Assembly for the ARENA party in 1991, in the same period when David Rodríguez served as Congressional Deputy for the FMLN representing the Department of La Paz. Blanca Avalos de Angulo, wife of Roberto, was appointed as governor of San Vicente under ARENA in 1998. Other family members received similarly privileged public positions.

The *colonos* for the Angulo family in *La Cayetana* supplemented their meager livelihoods by working during the coffee and sugar cane harvests between October and April.

²⁶² In 1930, President Pio Romero Bosque, San Vicente landowner of almost 14,000 hectares and neighbor of the Angulos, approved a resolution to erect bronze busts of General Nicolás Angulo and Indalecio Miranda, in the plaza San José of San Salvador, to the right and left of one of the founders of the Salvadoran republic, José Matías Delgado.

²⁶³ After divorcing his first wife, Yolanda Munguia, the daughter of a wealth landowning family from Usulután, D'Aubuisson would remarry Marta Luz Angulo in 1985. The Munguia ceded 150 mz of coffee land to PTT in Chinameca, 230 mz in Jiquilisco, 350 mz in Jucuaran, 200 mz in Tecapan,

In the coffee fincas there were no scales, so the workers were often robbed of the weight of their harvest when they delivered the picked coffee fruit.²⁶⁴ The salaries were not fixed, the contracts were verbal, and the situation steadily deteriorated because workers from northern departments arrived willing to work for even lower wages. The owner did not have to provide meals legally, it was more of a tradition. Tortillas were often made with sorghum instead of corn. Also, the *colonos* often lost earnings through deductions. Everyone was given a row of trees to work but if you broke even one branch, your entire days wage was discounted. Sleeping facilities were not provided, neither were bathrooms, nor doctors. However the National Guard was always present, especially on payday. David Rodríguez remembers little solidarity among the workers in the early 1970s, but distrust between local and migrant workers.

By the early 1970s, most living on the volcano were landless laborers.²⁶⁵ The economic conditions for the majority of people could easily be described as extreme poverty. Still, the community of *colonos* had a strong social tradition. The local school had been a demand of the community that the Angulos had conceded. The one room building had been built with donated adobe bricks and roof tiles and with donated community labor. It served not only as an elementary classroom offering a rudimentary education for children up to third grade, but also a ceremonial gathering place or small church, where local parties and holidays were celebrated. Geographically the school marked the center of the village.

León de Piedra was a neighboring village about ten minutes walk from *La Cayetana*, but also on land belonging to the Angulos.²⁶⁶ Nicolás García, ex-combatant, two term mayor of Tecoluca and now Congressional Deputy for the FMLN, was then studying in high school. He was bright and committed to the community as leader of a youth group. His teacher was Blanca Avalos de Angulo. He remembers her as strident and conservative in her political views and a poor instructor, with bad handwriting. She organized students to stone a caravan supporting the national teachers strike in 1968.

²⁶⁴ The canasta was measured by means of long measuring rod that estimated the height of the picked beans in the basket and converted it to a unit wage of 0.50¢ per *arroba*.

²⁶⁵ Interview, Gregorio Osorio, originally from *caserío* El Cumbo, April 1, 1998 San Carlos Lempa.

²⁶⁶ *León de Piedra* (Stone Lion) is named after a large rock with a carved figure of crouching lion, which marks the ruins of a prehistorical Pipil community, replete with unrestored pyramids and ball court.

Nicolás García was 16 in 1974, one of 11 brothers and sisters. He characterized life in *León de Piedra* as notable for its attitude of solidarity and political opposition to the ruling PCN. If someone needed something, everyone helped. Many families in *León de Piedra* were smallholders, having purchased lots of 2-5 hectares after the Angulos sub-divided and sold a small part of their estate. Therefore the villagers of *León de Piedra* were a little better off than those in *La Cayetana*, but still had to pick coffee and cut sugar cane to make ends meet. He remembers that the village *León de Piedra* was always an opposition village politically, initially identified with the Christian Democrats. The first community board of directors in 1969-70 were successful in getting electricity and water services from the municipality. With the exception of one family, all were organized in the community. These initial achievements contributed to an appreciation for local organization.

b. Cotton.

In the 1950s, the Angulos began growing cotton, like many of the haciendas on the coast. As cotton began to consume more of the nearby land traditionally used to grow household crops, two changes in the life of the *colonos* were almost immediate. The first was environmental. The contamination from the fumigation planes became a major concern within the community. Many of the trees surrounding the cotton fields, even some of the oldest and largest *ceiba* trees, were cleared indiscriminately in order to make room for the planes to sweep in very low to fumigate the cotton plants. The prevailing winds coming down off of the volcano, swept the chemicals into *La Cayetana*, poisoning food and drinking water. Pablo Anaya recalls, “The airplanes passed very low fumigating over the houses, which had thatch roofs and the plans poisoned us. The people who had small animals, watched them die.”²⁶⁷ Anaya emphasized this problem of contamination, and recalled stories of women giving birth to severely deformed children.

The second problem had to do with lost access to land. Pablo Anaya estimated that of the *colonos* in *La Cayetana*, as few as a quarter had access to about a manzana of land to work. The other 75% were landless and dependent upon the Angulo’s for work. In 1973, Coralía

²⁶⁷ Interview, Pablo Anaya, Nueva Tehuacan, Tecoluca, April 1998.

Angulo, on whose part of the Angulo estate the *colonos* from *La Cayetana* were dependent, decided to rent some of her land (the Hacienda Santa Teresa) to the wife of a Colonel Melendez from Usulután to plant cotton. As a result, the land that even a small number of families used to grow household crops was converted to cotton. The little autonomy that existed for these families suddenly disappeared.

c. Organization.

The process of organization in the *La Cayetana*, and within the zone was around the most basic problems -- the treatment of workers by landowners, lack of basic services in the communities and an increasing lack of access to land. The organizing was guided by access to religious and political elite leadership. However, the impetus for organization was largely internal.

David Rodríguez said a mass regularly in the *La Cayetana*, and in later coordination with Rafael Barahona worked patiently over several years with catechists to train delegates of the word, connect the community with other CEBs in Tecoluca and send a number of local peasant leaders, both men and women, to *Los Naranjos* or *El Castaño*.²⁶⁸ People from *La Cayetana* had been involved in the opposition to Molina's post-election visit and subsequent protest marches following Aparicio's attempts to pull Rodríguez from the parish. Experience with the bible circles, the peasant training centers and episodes of collective political action helped establish a solid foundation of community organization.

It is unclear when political organizers first entered the zone.²⁶⁹ La Asociación de Trabajadores Agrícolas y Campesinos de El Salvador (ATACES), a peasant organization associated with the Salvadoran Communist Party, first attempted to recruit community leaders, but did not have much success. Chencho Alas, working with FECCAS in Suchitoto, also invited community leaders to join FAPU, a base organization of the RN that had recently

²⁶⁸ Interview Nicolás García, whose father, Antonio was one of the two first sent from *León de Piedra* and was also a Caballero de Cristo Rey.

²⁶⁹ Just as liberationist priests helped facilitate initial encounters between peasant organizations and insurgent leaders in places like Morazán (see Binford) and Aguilares (see Cabarrus and Alas), David Rodríguez likely facilitated the encounters between UTC and FAPU or the FPL.

formed.²⁷⁰ Over time, leaders from FECCAS and the peasant leaders from *La Cayetana* developed strong ties. However, it was the *Fuerzas de Liberación Popular* that established the first solid relations with peasant activists in *La Cayetana*.

From the beginning, the FPL strategy was to build mass organizations from which the military structure would draw its support. Organizing was initiated by five or six political leaders from the capital, including the founder of the FPL, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, that clandestinely recruited local leaders as the first cadre as early as 1972.²⁷¹ FPL organizers would stay in the zone for about a week, and establish contact with certain local leaders.

This process of FPL formation of local cells proceeded parallel to the base community formation led by Padre David. Victor and Macario Hernandez, Fernando Panameño, Pablo Anaya all from *La Cayetana* were both FPL recruits and catechists. They attended cursillos at *Los Naranjos* and *El Castaño* where they talked about “Faith y Compromise”, and studied the Jesuit publication Peace and Justice. They then returned to their communities to assist in the delivering of the sacraments and leading bible study. On a more clandestine level, they also helped disseminate “*El Rebelde*” for the FPL.

Certain catechists and others were recruited by the FPL to form the first cells. The cells operated in absolute secrecy, even to other catechists. This network of leaders worked to convene meetings in the zone and later to organize participation in marches in San Salvador. Community meetings would be facilitated by the local leaders (playing a dual role as catechist/FPL recruit), but there would always be a FPL cell in contact with these leaders, supporting and critiquing their performance, instilling and forming the discipline needed to maintain different levels of security. The other communal leaders never knew that the support people from outside the community were actually the FPL central command.

Cell members often had to dedicate 2-3 days of the week to this activity of organizing different community leaders. As was the case when catechists left the community to attend cursillos, when cell members’ own agricultural work had to be neglected, others pitched in and worked cooperatively to provide food and lodging for them and their families.

²⁷⁰ Chéncho Alas, Fabian Amaya, and Bernardo Boulan were the priests working closely with FECCAS and RN.

²⁷¹ Interview with Pablo Anaya, referring to Cayetano Carpio (“Marcial”) - for whom Pablo served as security for four years). Other early FPL leaders in the region included Andres Torres, Milton Mendez, Dante Bettaglia, Felipe Pena, and Rene Franco. Some were students from San Salvador.

Growing out of the efforts of religious organizing, the Union of Farmworkers (UTC) was formed by FPL leaders.²⁷² UTC organizing in San Vicente began in 1972 and then spread out to other departments.²⁷³ Despite the illegality of rural unions, UTC organizers collected a 1 colon donation (about \$0.40 or a third of day's wage) from a peasant's monthly salary to go toward organizer expenses, but also benefited from community donations. The initial demands of the UTC were modest by comparison of what they would become later - better food, scales to ensure fair weights, higher wages, greater respect for workers by farm managers and the removal of the National Guard from the haciendas. The UTC slogan was, "11 colones, tortillas and beans."²⁷⁴

UTC commissions visited *hacienda* foremen and managers and some owners to make appeals for support for the UTC. The owners never responded favorably to appeals for small donations. However the more tolerant farm managers permitted UTC commissions to hold meetings with the workers. The more intransigent *caporales* were strong-armed during visits at night by armed and masked FPL combatants. Some concessions were won this way, including an increase in the unit rate for coffee harvest from 50 cents to 1.50¢ per arroba, and the inclusion of rice with meals.²⁷⁵

There was little repression at this stage (1972-74), the National Guard was not as visible on the haciendas, and the UTC was permitted some open space for organizing. This space proved crucial for consolidating local organization. After several years, all of the communities on the south and eastern slopes of the *Chinchontepec* volcano were organized with the UTC. Organizing *colonos*, landless laborers and smallholders alike to demand better working conditions from the large landowners, UTC members eventually numbered in the thousands.

²⁷² Interview Nicolás García. Early national leaders of the UTC from San Vicente included Francisco Alfaro (*León de Piedra*), Chele Méndez (Paz Opico), Fernando Panameño, Adrián González (*Cantón San Diego*). García also includes leaders from other departments, Apolinario Serrano, Facundo Guardado, Juan Chacon, and Justo Mejia, also identified as leaders of FECCAS. Clear attribution between peasant organizations or FPL is impossible given the double identities and frequent organizational merging that existed during this period.

²⁷³ It is not clear that the UTC openly identified itself as such before 1974. Some have located the official formation of the UTC as occurring after the Nov 1974 massacre in a meeting held in a cave named after Anastasio Aquino, in the Cerro Tacuazín (David Rodriguez Interview, Stefan Ueltzen, 1994: 252).

²⁷⁴ Informants recalled different versions of the UTC slogan, although most were variations on this general theme.

²⁷⁵ Nicolás García, interview, April 1999

Early FPL recruits were also some of the same catechists that David Rodríguez had trained. Victor Hernandez was one of the first catechists that the FPL recruited. Victor died in an accidental shootout in July 1974 with the manager of the Finca El Cuatro during an FPL clandestine action to communicate the demands of the UTC. To help cover up the circumstances surrounding the conspicuous death of two well-known members of the area, David Rodríguez was informed for the first time regarding the extent of FPL activity in the zone and the identity of several combatants. Not long after, Rodríguez was also recruited to join the FPL.

d. Confrontation with Coralía Angulo

The *colonos* of *La Cayetana* endured almost two years of having no access to their old farmland. They also had to compete for what work there was planting, tending and harvesting the cotton with peasants brought in from outside the area by the tenant. The deforestation washed more land than ever down over their houses when the rains came. Robbery at the scales increased health problems were making the peasants of *La Cayetana* increasingly desperate.

The first open community meeting to plan a strategy was held in April 1973. Residents of *La Cayetana* decided to confront Coralía Angulo and demand access to their old lands. Initially, the community tried to negotiate with the owner. The UTC helped the community collect money and offer to buy the land, or at least rent it (estimated at 125 colones per manzana per rental season). Coralía Angulo replied that the land was not for sale, and she would honor the existing contract to rent it to Ana Margoth de Mendez (wife of Col. Melendez). “So, you had better find some elsewhere to farm or you’ll starve to death.” Pablo Anaya, a member of the negotiating delegation responded, “Of starvation, we are not going to die.”²⁷⁶

When the workers from other provinces arrived in April 1974 to prepare the land and plant cotton, the peasants from *La Cayetana* confronted them and explained that no cotton would be planted this year. Instead, corn and beans would be planted. A partial takeover of

²⁷⁶ Interview, Pablo Anaya

Hacienda Santa Teresa began one night in May 1974. In an act of reappropriation, community members of *La Cayetana* decided to clear six manzanas (10 acres) of cotton during the night and planted corn in defiance of Angulo's refusal to rent. The taken land bordered the community and represented only a small part of the overall Angulo estate. The experience of clearing the land, planting and tending for the corn and beans was not only the first direct confrontation with the landowner, but also the first cooperative experience of production.

Between May and October 1974, despite threats of eviction from the Angulos, no direct confrontation happened, although events began to escalate. Periodic sabotage of crops, burning of sugar cane and cotton bushes occurred during the night on land of the most intransigent owners in the zone, including the Angulos. In October, during the beginning of the coffee harvest on the volcano, the UTC organized simultaneous strikes in four different coffee fincas, including the Angulo's Hacienda Paz Opico. During the strike, a guard from the Paz Opico finca shot and wounded one of the strikers, a woman. It was known that this same guard had raped a young female worker earlier that year. Armed members of the UTC executed the guard, the first open and violent killing of a person associated with the landowners.²⁷⁷ The strikes continued, disrupting the coffee harvest. Peasants from other organizations in the country, including FECCAS, arrived to the zone to show solidarity with the strikes. Coffee trees were cut down, and there were threats that the strikers would burn down the Angulo's house if the demands of the strikers were not met.

When the peasants of *La Cayetana* began to harvest the corn and beans they had planted after the coffee strikes and sabotage had died down, the National Guard was called upon to visit the community and arrest the troublemakers. Five Guardsmen (*judiciales*) first entered the village on November 26, with a list of names of alleged community leaders, including brothers Victor Hernandez, the President of the Cooperative who had died earlier, and Leonso Hernandez.²⁷⁸ They found Leonso Hernandez thrashing beans in front of his house and arrested him when copies of "El Rebelde" were discovered in a small hole behind his house.

²⁷⁷ Pablo Anaya recalls that an armed FPL/UTC peasant returned fire, wounding the guard, who tried to flee. The women present then finished off the man with stones and clubs. Interview, 1998.

²⁷⁸ Pablo Anaya says 3 NG entered the community before Nov. 26, and attempted to arrest Epifanio Clímaco. The bell was sounded, the community gathered, and one ex - reservist, Alejandro Mendez, jumped one of the Guard and wrestled away his rifle. The NG released Clímaco, and retreated after reaching an agreement that the rifle would be returned on condition that no one would be harmed.

Informants within the community had provided the Guard with names and data on key members of the resistance in *La Cayetana*.

The community met on various occasions to consider their actions and the potential reactions of the authorities, anticipating an inevitable confrontation.²⁷⁹ However, they believed they would not be targets of violence. They were convinced that only by unifying the entire community, could they defend themselves. Perhaps even more so, their primary concern was the fear that their recently harvested corn would be taken by the National Guard, and they might starve. Alicia Clímaco summarized the view of most. “We were sure that if we didn’t do something, our children would become no better than slaves of the Angulo family, like cattle with their own brand.”²⁸⁰

The community was therefore prepared for that day. The bell over the school was sounded as soon as Leonso was captured, calling everyone to gather there. Soon some 300 people from the community, armed with machetes, slingshots and sticks, quickly formed a menacing circle around the jeep of the National Guard, with Leonso sitting in the back seat - his hands bound behind his back.

Appeals for the release of the prisoner failed. When Leonso feigned thirst, the Guard loosened his handcuffs to allow him to take a quick drink before departing.²⁸¹ With his hands briefly free, the crowd closed on the jeep rescuing Leonso. Rocks were moved to block the road. After a three hour stand-off, under threat of mob violence, the Guard was forced to retreat on foot from the community, although threatening to return. The peasants of *La Cayetana*, having won the freedom of a community leader, were filled with confidence and indignation.

²⁷⁹ Interview Alicia Clímaco and Mercedes Hernández, San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca

²⁸⁰ Interview, Alicia Clímaco, San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca 1998

²⁸¹ Interview, David Rodriguez,

e. The events of the Massacre Nov. 29, 1974

Residents of *La Cayetana* met again in anticipation that when the Guard returned, violence was increasingly likely. Among the self-defense measures that were planned, the men would escape by fleeing toward the adjacent villages higher up on the volcano upon notice of the Guard's arrival to avoid capture. The women and children would remain.

When the Guard returned that Friday afternoon of November 29, 1974, Pablo Anaya remained at a distance of about 70 meters from where the machine gun was set up at the edge of the soccer field. The Guard contingent now numbered in the hundreds and included Police, soldiers from the Fifth Brigade and judiciales. The security forces arrived firing guns into the air and combing the community for the men. The presence of the Red Cross underscored the gravity of the situation. Anaya was one of a very few FPL cadre that had access to a pistol, but confronting the National Guard with arms would have been senseless. The Guard had arrived this time not simply looking for local leaders, but to deliver a massive psychological blow that would strike fear into the community.

As the security forces deployed their troops around the community, some peasants were unaware of the plans to desert the community or chose to stay and confront the Guard. Perhaps they still refused to believe that as in all prior encounters with authority that year, their determination and cleverness would win out. The Guard quickly arrested 14 men, blindfolded them and put them in one of the trucks. Then, 18 others were stripped, forced face down on the ground in front of the school. The soldiers beat these peasants with rifle butts, and walked over the backs of their heads, demanding the names and whereabouts of the community leaders.

When hearing the gunfire as the Guard arrived in the *La Cayetana*, Benedicto Morataya was walking back to *León de Piedra* from picking coffee all day at Finca La Paz, with other men and women from their village.²⁸² They decided to investigate the problem, and a delegation of about 30 people from *León de Piedra* made their way toward *La Cayetana*. They arrived at about 5 pm, in the midst of the persecution of *La Cayetana* peasants, and attempted to intervene peacefully to persuade the Guard commander to release the prisoners they had taken, and to stop the torture of the others. As Benedicto Morataya and five other men

²⁸² Finca La Paz was also the property of Coralia Angulo.

approached the Guard commander, they were ordered to stop. Benedicto and the others continued to approach and the order was given to fire. The six men were machine gunned down. A monument now stands to mark the time and place. It reads, *Martyrs of the Struggle for Land, Diego de Jesus Hernandez Gonzalez, Jesus Morataya Belloso , José Benedicto Morataya Galvez, Jose Hernan H. Belloso, José Jorge García, Miguel Rodríguez Belloso, Nov. 29, 1974, La Cayetana, Tecoluca – Christian Communities.*

The local press reported,

The block of PCN deputies rejected a motion to investigate the deaths of six peasants that occurred on Nov. 29 in San Vicente.²⁸³ The motion was made by Christian Democrat deputy for San Vicente, Dr. Julio Samayoa, but immediately after being read yesterday in the plenary session of the National Assembly, was endorsed by all of the PDC deputies. Between three and four pm in the afternoon, on the 29th of November, 1974, contingents of the National Guard and the National Police, the latter dressed in civilian clothes, heavily armed and aboard various official and private trucks, arrived in the hamlet of La Cayetana, in the village of León de Piedra, jurisdiction of the municipality of San Vicente, shooting off their firearms and sowing terror among the peasants, that at this time were returning to their homes after finishing their day's labor in the fields.

A 51 mm caliber mortar cannon was placed on the soccer field, aimed at the community, and a Red Cross ambulance of the Armed Forces was stationed strategically on the road, and everything indicated they were preparing a military operation of large proportion against the enemy. It was apparent that the military were ready both technically and professionally for a confrontation. Upon hearing the shots and the encirclement of their houses, many of the peasants ran in terror toward the higher reaches of the San Vicente volcano looking for somewhere to hide, being pursued until reaching a place called El Potrerillo (the small pasture). A large number of peasants were captured and forced up into the trucks, while the others, that were not as lucky, upon returning from hauling coffee in their carts, and becoming aware of the danger that they had run into, ran to hide in nearby huts, where it is said, they were machine gunned down, dying instantly. Some of the dead were cut to pieces with machete blows and their remains were placed in baskets that were brought along for just such a purpose. Then the baskets were lifted into one of the trucks which departed in an unknown direction.

After nearly three hours of terror, the Guard contingent forced nearly thirty other peasants onto the trucks and began leaving. At the entrance to the village, half of those taken prisoner were pushed out of the truck, after having acid sprayed in their eyes to assure they would not see which direction the National Guard troops escaped. Fourteen other peasants from the *La Cayetana* remained in the truck and were ultimately held and tortured by the Guard for over a week, until growing public pressure secured their release of several.

²⁸³ Call To Investigate the Deaths of Six Peasants in San Vicente is Rejected. *Diario de Hoy*, Wed. Dec. 3, 1974

An official investigation into the *La Cayetana* massacre failed to assign responsibility. The Ministry of Defense issued the following press release:

Yesterday at 5:00 pm, in the hamlet of La Cayetana, San Vicente, when National Guard and National Police patrols conducted a sweep in pursuit of local criminals, they were ambushed by a group of unidentified individuals, who attacked the patrols with firearms. The attack was repelled by the security forces leaving a balance of four dead attackers and one wounded agent of the National Guard from the encounter. The rest of the criminals are being sought, and an investigation of the event is underway.

The event sent shockwaves throughout the country. President Molina arrived personally in the village several days later to attempt to calm the waters. The handful of Christian Democrat deputies in the Congress, led by fellow Vicentino, Dr. Julio Samayoa called for an official investigation. The PCN majority blocked the motion.²⁸⁴ Investigators from the Justice Ministry arrived, took testimony. No charges were filed.

The pseudo-investigation failed to calm the waters. Solidarity strikes occurred on the cotton and sugar cane plantations in the coastal sector of Tecoluca. Thirty days after the massacre, FAPU organized a protest in Tecoluca, and then a march to *La Cayetana*. As one of the march leaders, Nicolás García recalled that his uncle, Rubén Sanchez, fired upon the protesters with two pistols when his bakery was painted with graffiti. After injuring two marchers, Sanchez was wounded by armed militants within the crowd, and it advanced toward the main plaza.

Bishop Aparicio verbally denounced the massacre in his sermons, but in private was critical of the community leaders. When visited by a delegation from *La Cayetana* to request solidarity and a formal denunciation from the Bishop, he responded, “what you people need is an even harder jolt (*palizo*), so that you finally learn.”²⁸⁵ Formal support for an investigation

There are several remarkable aspects to this event. The first is that the overwhelming force called in by the Angulos was evidence of a shift in the repressive capacity that the government was willing to exercise in defense of the property rights in the region. The first massacre in the region signaled that a threshold had been passed. Another similar massacre

²⁸⁴ At the time, the PDC had 7 deputies, MNR – 2, and UDN – 2. The PCN controlled the other 49.

²⁸⁵ Interview, Pablo Anaya and Alicia Clímaco.

occurred six months later, in *Tres Calles*, about 10 km to the east of *La Cayetana*.²⁸⁶ These massacres signaled for many that, “there were no alternatives left to preparation for armed struggle,” and they assumed legendary status in the discourse of resistance.

Secondly, as brutal as the event was, it failed to break the determination of the victims. This may be attributed to several factors, including the prior level of organization and communal solidarity had been built and tested over the previous 3-4 years. While not all were in agreement with the actions taken, solidarity bridged landless and landowners, urban and rural, and joined political organizations across party lines. It is essential to remember that the six men who were shot were not from *La Cayetana*, but from landowning families that acted out of a sense of communal obligation to their landless neighbors. Immediate solidarity from outside the community reinforced commitments that had been patiently forged. Amazingly, this massive blow did not break the community, it only hardened the resolve to fight back.

Third, the events leading up to the massacre clearly suggest an escalation in attempts to shift the balance of power in the region by an organized peasantry. The confrontation with Coralía Angulo was one of many that were occurring as a test of the strength of the UTC. It’s likely that these confrontations did not begin with David Rodríguez refusing to convey religious legitimacy to local landlords, nor ended with *La Cayetana* in terms of the day to day tests of local power that gathered steam in the early 1970s.

David Stoll has argued that these types of provocations by unwelcomed revolutionary organizations have unnecessarily placed the necks of an indefensible civilian population on the chopping block. The expected violence by the landowning elites would either swell the ranks with new recruits and fortify revolutionary commitments or destroy the organization. *La Cayetana* seems to fit a larger narrative that Stoll offers to explain the disastrous results of similar provocative acts in Guatemala’s Ixil Triangle in this same period.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ On June 21, 1975, the National Guard killed Jose Alberto Astorga and three sons, Santos Morales and two sons, 7 men and children in all in the community of Tres Calles, San Agustín, Usulután.

²⁸⁷ Stoll (1993). Danner (1992) makes similar inferences about the motivations and consequences of the 1980 Mozote massacre in Morazán. Both suggest that guerrilla forces coerced an uncommitted peasantry by implanting itself and staging isolated attacks, knowing that the military would use excessive force and force displaced peasants to join the insurgency.



Figure 4.5 Pablo Anaya, FMLN ex-combatant and survivor, standing in 1998 beside monument erected to the “Martyrs of the Struggle for Land, Nov. 29, 1974, *La Cayetana*, Tecoluca – Christian Communities”

Yet, other details of the story indicate that UTC's mettle had already been tested. Many residents had already participated in successful collective actions, assessed the risks as a community and were acting with relative autonomy from any single political or religious influence that was prevalent in the region. At decisive moments, decisions were taken by community members alone and if local FPL organizers such as Leonso Hernandez were considered an outside provocateur, his neighbors would not likely have risked their lives attempted to save his.

As such, the community and the UTC were able to survive, and in fact, matured into one of the most effective insurgent forces within the FMLN. This autonomy had its price. The first major offensive by the National Guard in November 1976 targeted the communities of *León de Piedra* and *La Cayetana*, effectively forcing most young men to join the FPL and family members to seek refuge in newly formed communities of resistance higher up on the volcano. Popular militia now operated openly on the volcano and the structure of the FPL began to take shape. A wave of land and building takeovers followed, led by the popular organizations. The first clandestine recuperation of military caliber arms came next, complementing the assortment of rustic hunting and household guns that were both requisitioned and donated. Soon after, the sparse but more heavily armed insurgents organized the first attacks against local National Guard posts. The train of revolution began moving down the tracks. There would be no turning back.

David Rodríguez identified the massacre of *La Cayetana* as a turning point. The political demands that were a product of the organizing of the progressive church had been taking an ever deeper root. "The Parish Plan had awakened a hunger, but it did not provide food. By late 1974 the Parish Plan had reached its limit, the aspirations of the peasantry had grown beyond the influence of the church." In early 1975, Rodríguez formally joined the FPL as a political-military organizer.

Pablo Anaya, reflecting back after 25 years, remained convinced that the massacre at *La Cayetana* was a decisive moment in the history of events that ultimately led to armed resistance. It was intended to squelch an emerging peasant movement. Instead, it became a code word for heroic resistance and motivated more intensified organizing in San Vicente and in other zones to act as well.

Nicolás García, whose older brother Jorge was killed at *La Cayetana*, was one of six brothers who joined the FPL. He pointed to *La Cayetana* as an inevitable destiny for a community in which solidarity was so entrenched. The UTC and FPL organizing of claims making and self-defense capacities were tempered by early confrontations with local authority, explaining in part their survival and consequent influence on wartime and postwar local organization and empowerment strategies.

Not all were in favor nor fully aware of the risks taken by the local militant organizing of the UTC. Community meetings leading up to the violent stand-off with the National Guard did not include 100% of the families, as some have indicated. Others from *León de Piedra* and reactions to post-massacre protests have suggested that some families were divided and did not fully endorse the growing combativeness toward local landowners or the National Guard. In both villages there were known informers and active collaboration with death squads.²⁸⁸ It is also evident that the participants in the organizing held different expectations of the likely consequences of their actions. Some acknowledged that they were embarking on a high risk revolutionary path fully aware of the potential costs, but others did not recall this prior commitment.

While no peasant village could be expected to have fully anticipated and established consensus around the course of action chosen, the evidence of prior layers of political and religious organizing over a period of as much as five years, the gradual unfolding of the confrontation with the Angulos during which community meetings were held to map out a strategy, and the unplanned arrival of landowning peasants from *León de Piedra* in response to the perceived distress of their neighbors – all speak to the depth of local organizing prior to the arrival of the National Guard. Contrary to Stoll, during this period, the Angulos or local dissenting families would have enjoyed considerable autonomy in derailing the process through earlier interventions. Indeed, some evidence suggests that local organizing crossed numerous such thresholds before the massacre itself, triggered in part by local officials and peasants sympathetic to the landowners. The gathering capacity of peasant organizing can not be reduced to the provocative leadership of key outsiders, such as David Rodríguez or urban FPL

²⁸⁸ Interviews with Pablo Anaya, Gregorio Osorio and Nicolás García.

commanders (although these influences were undoubtedly significant), or it would have been much more quickly extinguished- as Stoll accurately characterizes in the Ixil case.

There are perhaps several key factors that explain why *La Cayetana* avoided the fate of Stoll's Ixil victims. These factors include the sharpened land scarcity and disruption of patron-client relations caused by cotton production, the respective organizational capacities of the insurgent/military forces or the reactionary/progressive church, and finally, the nemesis of scientific research - inexplicable luck. Both accounts of effective and failed revolutionary organizing rely on limited and selective evidence, which ultimately favors the plausibility of both but challenges the generalizability of either.²⁸⁹ In fact, *La Cayetana*'s discordance with Stoll's argument must confront the noted parallels in the other cases below.

As the conflict engulfed the *Chinchontepec* volcano, the Angulos were forced to abandon their property – one of many highly visible cracks that formed in the edifice of landowner control over peasant lives. Over the course of the war, the hacienda would be destroyed in attacks on the National Guard post and occupied for long periods as an FMLN concentration point. The remains of the once majestic Hacienda Paz Opico and Tehuacan Opico, along with the chapel in *La Cayetana*, now sit hidden under vegetation.

2. Case Two - *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*:

The tragic history of El Salvador is that *La Cayetana* represented only the first in many similar gross acts of violence that would occur over the next two decades. However, these crucial moments involved different choices by those involved and likewise, different outcomes. A similar turning point for Jiboa Valley communities, although not as well documented, is that of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*, in Verapáz, where a peasant movement that shared many of the features of *La Cayetana* was derailed by another brutal massacre by the National Guard on March 23, 1980.

²⁸⁹ In the same way that Stoll's narrative is based largely on interviews with those Guatemalans that fled from the EGP, my account of *La Cayetana* rests largely although not exclusively on testimony of those who remained with the FPL. For logistical reasons, Stoll is unable to contrast the views of his informants with the 12,000 who chose, voluntarily or not, to remain in the Communities of Populations in Resistance, or EGP combatants themselves. See Wood (2003: 234, fn 7) for other methodological concerns related to Stoll's analysis.

The five year period (1975-1980) between *La Cayetana* and *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* was one of polarization that steadily closed all political space for civil opposition. Insurgent and paramilitary violence escalated with kidnappings, sporadic bombings of security and economic infrastructure, and expanded recruitment by insurgents and a steady shift from selective targets to indiscriminate attacks by security forces on the right.

FECCAS and the UTC merged to form the Peasant Workers Front (FTC), and soon after, steered the formation of the principal mass resistance organization, the Revolutionary Popular Bloque (BPR). The FTC strengthened solidarity and collaboration between peasant communities in the paracentral region and those in region to the north of San Salvador. The centrist UCS, despite crises in funding and relations with their U.S. government sponsors, continued to incorporate cooperatives and grow.²⁹⁰ ORDEN and the death squads, in turn, became less restrained in the use of violence to intimidate peasants participating in opposition activities.

The Molina government proposed a modest agrarian reform in 1976, supported by a coalition of academics and peasant groups, while the BPR advanced proposals to reform the Agrarian law governing wages and working conditions. Landowners and the industrial elite quickly closed ranks to block any meaningful reforms. San Vicente hard-liners were key participants in the landowner opposition to proposed reforms.

Through blatant fraud, the PCN eliminated all legislative and municipal opposition and installed Col. Humberto Romero, former Minister of Defense under Molina, as president in 1977. As President, Romero unleashed death squad and security force leaders to carry out a systematic assault on the popular church. Between 1977 and 1981, sixty priests were expelled from El Salvador. Eleven priests, three nuns, Archbishop Romero and many more lay workers and catechists were killed. In the San Vicente diocese, two priests were executed (Fr. Alirio Napoleon Macías of San Esteben Catarina and Fr. Cosme Spezzoto, of Santiago Nonualco), several others tortured (included Fr. Barahona of Tecoluca and Fr. Valladares of Verapáz), and several more forced into exile (Fr. Benigno Rodríguez). The popular church was slowly forced underground.

²⁹⁰ AIFLD was expelled from El Salvador in August 1973 and the U.S. government funded Inter-American Foundation took over as the principal funder of UCS.

Between 1977-1979, factory and farm strikes proliferated, in addition to office and land takeovers, kidnappings and executions. Coordinated occupations of key farms in the paracentral region were carried out by the FTC during Holy Week, 1977.²⁹¹ Violent evictions followed, but the confrontations with landowners and security forces steeled the confidence of a growing rural insurgency.

Both nationally and internationally, the political context careened toward civil war. The Sandinistas toppled Somoza in July, 1979. An ambivalent Carter administration in the U.S. began to urge Col. Romero to resign, who in turn rejected conditioned U.S. military aid and circumvented other sanctions on internationally financed projects.²⁹² In October, 1979, a reformist junta deposed President Romero and announced a series of sweeping economic and political reforms, including agrarian reform.

By one account, political murders increase from a yearly average of 14 between 1972-1977, to 299 between 1977-1978 to 1,030 in 1979. This was only a prelude to 1980, when between 16,500 and 19,500 Salvadorans were killed, 75% of which were civilians.²⁹³ The first junta dissolved, followed by a second. Each attempt to form a government shifted decisively to the right. In early March, 1980, a third attempt was made to form a provisional government, personified by PDC leaders such as Napoleon Duarte but led by military leader, Jaime Abdul Gutierrez, considered by some as a moderate. A massive land reform was announced on March 6 to be implemented under force of military arms. Two UCS leaders were tapped to head the land reform agency, ISTA, and the UCS was positioned by U.S. advisors to champion the program.

²⁹¹ These included Hacienda Guajoyo, Porvenir, La Mora in Tecoluca and Hacienda Platanares, Zacatecoluca.

²⁹² In March, 1977 President Romero declared a state of siege and the human rights deteriorated quickly. In July, 1977, President Carter blocked approval of the \$90 million IDB loan for the 15 of September dam. The loan was then approved in October, 1977, representing a crucial concession to support one of the most repressive regimes in the hemisphere.

²⁹³ Baloyra (1983: 190). Pre-1977 estimates are clearly inaccurate.

a. Life in pre-war Jiboa Valley

In the context of spiraling violence and ungovernability, we find the Jiboa Valley wedged between deepening revolutionary conflict in Tecoluca and Aguilares-Suchitoto-Cinquera, yet relatively acquiescent. In part, this may have been due to the absence of cotton production in the region and disproportionate number of smallholders in the sugar sector. While the expansion of coffee and sugar production continued unabated, concentrating the region's productive assets, the impact in terms of landlessness and unemployment may have been relatively lower.

Another reason may involve the type of landowner that dominated the Jiboa Valley. The Cristiani family's influence in the Jiboa Valley exceeded that of the Angulos to the south. The Angulos, despite accumulating tremendous wealth from their agricultural assets and the political appointments that came with it, failed to penetrate the highest echelons of El Salvador's political economic elite. The Cristiani Burkard – Llach syndicate, on the other hand, diversified coffee, cotton and sugar holdings in the 1970s to catapult themselves into one of the country's richest families. Strategically employing his later influence within ARENA as former President, Alfredo Cristiani has focused on building his business empire. Through extended family representation, family holdings now include a diverse portfolio that has clearly benefited from close ties to government officials.²⁹⁴

Cristiani family members hold major ownership shares of Central America's largest bank, the country's most lucrative private pension company, an insurance company, various investment firms, computer equipment & farm inputs import and distribution companies, two coffee exporting companies, a major drug store chain, a sporting goods store chain, a plastics fabrication and a cemetery.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Cristiani has been associated with a number of scandals that have strongly suggested that preferential contracts and corruption between his businesses and government programs (BFA, MAG, ISSS, BCR) are common, although never prosecuted. Perhaps the most significant and spectacular of these was the recapitalization and privatization of the national banking sector as President, only to become the lead investor in Banco Cuscatlan.

²⁹⁵ Paniagua Serrano and Chávez Henríquez (2000: 66-79); See also special edition of *Estudios Centroamericanos*, "El Bloque Empresarial Hegemónico Salvadoreño," Jul-Aug. 2002, Vol. 645-646. Eduardo Colindres (1977), Sevilla (1985), Albiac (1999).

Cristiani was 33 in 1980 and conservative, but not involved in politics. Roberto D'Aubuisson, the founder of ARENA, had become the principal architect of the counter-insurgency strategy of the landed elite and the suspected leader of the White Hand death squad (Pyes and Beckland 1983; Nairn 1984). D'Aubuisson was familiar with the Jiboa Valley, through motivational visits to civil defense forces in villages such as San Emigdio, and the orchestrated resettlement of client refugee groups in FMLN controlled areas nearby.

By contrast, Cristiani was not considered one of the true believers in the extreme right political leadership. However, increasingly targeted by insurgents in San Vicente, the pre-war experience pushed Cristiani toward reliance on protection by the extreme right. This partnership between Cristiani and D'Aubuisson, like that entered into by other members of the coffee oligarchy in the region, became a protection racket, which was a critical factor in pacifying the Jiboa Valley. A hard line would be drawn against the FMLN in the Jiboa Valley. In 1988, D'Aubuisson handpicked Cristiani as the ARENA Presidential candidate.²⁹⁶

b. Organization

The weak foundation of CEB organizing in the Jiboa Valley did not allow nascent organized opposition to establish more than a few pockets of support, disconnected and fledgling. About twenty families based in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* represented the most ambitious effort to build a peasant opposition movement that targeted the local coffee elite. Yet, even within this community, progressive catechists were a minority. The absence of an established network of catechists and layworkers in the Jiboa Valley was due to the pervasive suspicion of local organizing that actively opposed the influence of liberation theology priests and fenced in the few, small CEB initiatives that did take root. Most catechists were resigned to the unjust conditions of the coffee economy. Organizing began later when events like *La Cayetana* had increased the obstacles to collective action strategies. This insecurity and the constant surveillance by the local civil patrols made overt organizing nearly impossible.

The space unoccupied by progressive religious organizing was filled by ORDEN and a reinforced civil patrol network. Under threat by the municipal and departmental commanders,

²⁹⁶ Interview published in *Diario de Hoy*, 2005

volunteers from every *cantón* were pressed into civil defense duties. Reluctance to serve was generally expressed in retrospect, however the fear of reprisal by the military or paramilitary forces was overwhelming.

Despite the climate of intimidation that prevailed, some space for opposition was opened. In 1974-75, there was an attempt by workers at the *Beneficio* Acahuapa in San Cayetano Istepeque to unionize. According to one source that collaborated with the effort for FENASTRAS, a provisional union was achieved for a time before individual union leaders were persecuted and fled.²⁹⁷ Opposition mayors were elected or appointed in Verapáz and San Cayetano by the late 1970s. On Jan 15, 1980, Isabel Mejía Flores, a sixty year old mayor of San Cayetano Istepeque for the UDN, along with his son, José Napoleon Mejía and Elio Sanchez, catechist and secretary of the municipal council were arrested and tortured by the National Guard. The opposition mayor was later killed by death squads, but his son joined the insurgency.

After several years of clandestine organizing, in 1978, the political organizers based in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* decided the time had come to challenge the local coffee elite. Several leaders, Rufino Sanchez, Pedro Mira, and Juan Hernandez were delegated to represent the workers in negotiations with Alfredo Cristiani over improved benefits for seasonal coffee pickers. The principal demands were adherence to the labor law permitting payment for the seventh workday (*Séptimo*), wage increases, fair weights at the scales and better food. In an attempt to co-opt the peasant negotiators, they were offered preferred work assignments and higher individual salaries. When they refused, Cristiani circulated pamphlets to all area fincas that effectively blacklisted the men from future employment. The most compliant families were then selected by local landowners to fill the relatively lucrative harvest positions, using this discretion to marginalize workers from opposition communities.

During the following harvest in November 1979, the coffee pickers of the Jiboa Valley organized takeovers of the principal fincas owned by Cristiani (Las Margaritas, El Carmen). Organizers used their control of the fincas to assign work more equitably and reiterated previous wage demands. After several weeks, Cristiani appeared to concede. Bi-monthly pay,

²⁹⁷ Interview, former FENASTRAS organizer, Granzaso, Tecoluca Aug. 1998.

which included the *Séptimo* benefit, was dropped to the occupied fincas by helicopter. The takeover endured for the entire harvest.

The victory was short-lived. Waiting until the harvest had ended but watching as the military prepared to intervene and redistribute farms across the country, Cristiani had the National Guard exact retribution against the community of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*. The local civil patrol chiefs, mostly landowners themselves, identified beforehand which families were involved with the coffee strike. In turn, families collaborating with the Guard were given warning that an attack was imminent and began to vacate. The families allied with the coffee strike began sleeping away from the community, only returning to prepare meals.

In February 1980, Mario Dimas was killed by unknown assailants and Juan Hernandez and Pedro Mira were arrested. At dawn on March 23, 1980 the National Guard moved in and massacred twenty people. The corpses were buried in the community chapel. Some 200 families deserted the *cantón* taking refuge in the *cabecera* of Verapáz. Having been identified as the principal leaders of peasant organizing and a likely FMLN encampment, the community of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* was annihilated.²⁹⁸ Opposition organizing never recovered on this side of the *Chinchontepec* volcano. The day following the massacre at *Aguas Calientes*, a death squad sniper assassinated Archbishop Oscar Romero while saying mass in a small chapel in San Salvador.

Much more needs to be investigated about this second case, but there are apparent similarities and major differences between this turning point and the one at *La Cayetana*. First, pre-existing ties of reciprocity may have also existed between *Aguas Calientes* and neighboring villages, although few inter-community collective actions were recounted in historical testimony. There existed little collective sense of injustice, outrage or alienation over experiences such as the massacre. Rather, individualist and apolitical critiques of the war centered on the arbitrary and personalized nature of the violence that tended to assign equal

²⁹⁸ Survivors of the *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* massacre dispute claims regarding the level of FMLN sympathy among the 200 families then living in the village. Several informants argued that violence against the community was perpetrated on the basis of personal grievances rather than solid information. Another source suggested that the killings in *Aguas Calientes* were revenge for an FMLN assassination at the INCAFE coffee storage facility in neighboring Molineros. The INCAFE victim had personal ties with a local Sergeant who retaliated by killing the suspects in custody in *Aguas Calientes*. It is not clear how widely it is now acknowledged that some degree of clandestine military organizing, including storing of arms, was ongoing in the village. Interviews, Verapáz, Molineros, Agua Agria and San Pedro Aguas Calientes, July 1998

blame on both the FMLN and government security forces. Residents in Molineros described how youth from *Aguas Calientes* would visit for soccer matches, only to attempt to recruit the opposing team for political activities. What was dangerous about this recruitment was not the potential conversion to communism, but the certain retribution that the family would suffer as a result.²⁹⁹ Some families within *Aguas Calientes* remain resentful that an entire *cantón* was falsely identified as an insurgent hotspot. Equal responsibility is attributed to the victims and the security forces.

Second, while political and religious opposition allies were available to organizers in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*, the solidarity was insufficient to prepare for and guide the community through this crisis. No marches were organized in protest, no delegations were made to signal outside support, and few if any active insurgent cells were capable of capitalizing on the disruption to peasant lives. Silence prevailed. The PRTC, which had only formed in 1976 and was much smaller than the FPL, coordinated with community leaders but never seemed to have a major presence in the Jiboa Valley or northern slopes of the volcano at that time. Key actors in the popular church played a role, both from the San Vicente and San Salvador dioceses, but were more effectively opposed by reactionary clergy in Guadalupe and San Vicente. Catechists, some of whom became active in the early 1970s, were nevertheless divided. Without widespread endorsement of a liberation theology type Parish Plan, the level of parish organization and unity achieved in Tecoluca was never possible.

Third, Cristianí's use of overwhelming force was effective in taking any steam the burgeoning peasant movement might have had. The National Guard reportedly forbid any of the victim's families to bury their dead collectively to crush any resurgence of communal solidarity. Despite frequent shows of force by FMLN combatants during the war, early reprisals against families with members that had joined the insurgency had a chilling effect on local communal actions. Unlike Tecoluca, no apparent measures were taken or organizational capacity achieved for effective self-defense of those family members that were suspected of insurgent collaboration but chose to remain in their homes.

As a result, just as *La Cayetana* has served as code for resistance and transformation in the collective memory of FMLN communities, *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* came to represent

²⁹⁹ Interview Molineros and Agua Agria.

the equally symbolic decay of peasant respect for rural authority and defeat of such impulses in government controlled zones like the Jiboa Valley. Still, the latter massacre never assumed the same pride of place in the heroic narratives of communist resistance recorded in post-war civilian testimony in the surrounding area. Rather, the massacre in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* is described with candor as an example of the punishment a peasant must always expect when one transgresses the rural order.

In *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* we find a situation much closer to Stoll's analysis of Guatemala. The provocation of a strike against the most powerful local coffee baron without the prior establishment of a solid basis for community support and self-defense was probably a leap of faith with which the majority disagreed. Much stronger reservations now voiced by the survivors of the 1980 massacre raise many of the concerns that Stoll explores in his challenge to the solidarity perspective of such events. Perhaps most persuasive is the imprint that the violence has left on the collective psyche manifested in the blame assigned to the victims as well as the National Guard.

3. Case Three - *San Francisco de la Cruz*, "*El Pulguero*" & *Las Canoas*:

The final illustration shows how a combination of events proved decisive in defining the political opportunity structure of action in San Ildefonso. The receptivity to agrarian reform and FMLN violence toward cooperative leaders in 1980 in several highland communities represents the closest thing to a turning point of the kind described above. It resulted in strategic choices that are most associated not with the active insurgent or counter-insurgent options noted above, but a moderate reform alternative that staked its hopes on the Christian Democrat political project. This turning point event differs from both of the prior two in that it describes the history of insurgent violence and, for the most part, the avoidance of conflict. While San Ildefonso experienced its share of political violence in the years leading up to the war, no single event was as significant as the perceived opening provided by the agrarian reform process and the fumbled initial FMLN policies toward cooperative leaders. Reactions to the implementation of agrarian reform and early attacks on at least two cooperatives

represent the crucial turning point for the strategic choices that shaped expectations and institutions in San Ildefonso for years to come.

a. Life in pre-war San Ildefonso

In the years leading up to the war, rural economic relations had not reached the level of confrontation in other areas, although conflict bordered the municipality on all sides. While economic conditions were equally catastrophic for the rural poor, the elite in San Ildefonso were provincial, not “cosmopolitan”. That is, while some export crops were cultivated, these growers started late and most continued to live within the municipality. Moreover, most were dependent upon the local labor force and thus a lingering mutual respect endured longer in San Ildefonso.³⁰⁰ Thus conditions never came to transform the pre-war rural landscape and social relations as completely as in the other municipal regions.

Gerardo Rodríguez and Fermín Cortéz, were the current leaders (in 1998) of the communal organization and cooperative, respectively, of the highland community of *San Francisco de la Cruz* (“*El Pulguero*”) of the *cantón*, Guachipilín. The Lazo family owned 9 or 10 properties in the region, and produced sugar cane and rice in San Francisco de la Cruz. As former *colonos*, both referred to treatment of workers by the Lazo family, with mix of resentment and empathy. *Colonos* working for the Lazo Amaya family that owned several farms in neighboring Las Canoas also described a tolerable working relationship. Neither were tinderboxes of protest.

Abusive conditions existed for *colonos* and laborers working on a good number of large farms in San Ildefonso, and several owners were notoriously cruel.³⁰¹ However, there were also owners that had reputations for generosity, and in sum, little justification for insurrection existed. From both the perspective of the landowner and the peasant, both parties were trying to manage a deteriorating social contract, when outside factors polarized the situation. Instead, most conflicts were at the individual level.

³⁰⁰ Interviews, Miguel Cornejo, Los Almendros; Santiago Meléndez, San Ildefonso.

³⁰¹ Manuel Aguilúz paid 1 colon per temporary laborers when the minimum wage was 2.25 colones, and was reportedly fined by Ministry of Labor for wage violations. Interview, Pablo Torres, Sihuatepeque, San Ildefonso.

b. Organization

As both peasant grievances and landowner indifference or hostility mounted, goodwill and patience among the workers toward the *patrono* were exhausted by the late 1970s. However, there were few cases of organized land takeovers or organized attempts to negotiate better conditions with landowners prior to the war.³⁰² At the same time, municipalities to the west in the Cerros de San Pedro region of San Vicente, insurgents had established deep support in most of the rural communities and were recruiting in the highland communities of San Ildefonso. Although not immune to this influence, events early in the conflict weakened the support that the FMLN would ever have there.

In neither region was the popular church nor the displacement caused by export crop expansion as dramatic as in Tecoluca or the Jiboa Valley. The influence of Padre Macias in San Esteben Catarina before his death in 1979, as well as that of the Rodríguez brothers, was minimal. The collaboration between the reactionary laity within the church, the municipal council and the military provided little space for pastoral agents to even begin working.³⁰³

While the popular church did not have much impact on awakening peasant indignation, many were exposed to the emerging resistance organized by political and religious organizers during the cotton harvests in neighboring Usulután, where many migrated in the off-season. As in the Jiboa Valley, pockets of PRTC recruits were recruited and trained clandestinely where working conditions were the most inhumane. However, these efforts were disconnected with neighboring communities.³⁰⁴

The construction of the *15 de Septiembre* dam that began in 1977 indirectly influenced the political linkages that would come to dominate San Ildefonso. The dam's reservoir flooded 3,500 hectares of the region's most productive farmland and in turn eliminated employment on

³⁰² One reported takeover was the Hacienda San Pablo Cañas of Manuel Aguilúz.

³⁰³ Interview, "Chaca", former commander in Northern San Vicente, April, 1998.

³⁰⁴ Cells were established among *colonos* on the Hacienda Los Almendros, Interview, Miguel Cornejo, July, 1998.

some export oriented farms, closed transit routes for many peasants that migrated for the harvests, and displaced thousands along the banks of the Lempa River. The decision to sell was taken by local landowners after little or no consultation with the local *colono* and laborer population. Some of the 250-500 families displaced by the reservoir reported little advance warning before the water was at their doorstep.³⁰⁵ For those who remained, the quality of life has deteriorated steadily, independent of the war.



Figure 4.6 The 15 of September Hydroelectric Dam spanning the Lempa River bordering San Ildefonso (left) and the province of Usulután (right) (Photo by CEL).

³⁰⁵ The IDB (1985) reports that between 1982 and 1984, 250 families were relocated with assistance from the state power agency, (CEL) to housing built in the *cantón* of Condadillo, Estanzuelas, Usulután, overlooking the dam.

While some families were relocated, most were colonos and they were not compensated but had to negotiate the sale of the land they would occupy.³⁰⁶ Others had to absorb personal losses of displacement or adapt to the new environment. In other settings, dams had been a source for peasant mobilization. The construction of El Salvador's first major hydroelectric dam, *El Cerron Grande*, beginning in 1969, was the spark for peasant organizing. The dam which was completed in 1976, flooded 14,000 hectares of farmland in the upper Lempa basin of Chalatenango and Cuscatlán. To accommodate the reservoir, large landowners sold off their land at an inflated price, but offered no resources to relocate the peasants who would be displaced. Local peasants inhabiting the proposed reservoir area were opposed to the project.³⁰⁷ While the peasant organizations were unable to block the dam's construction, the organizing effort was instrumental as a confidence and consciousness raising experience.

San Ildefonso did not experience a violent confrontation when families were displaced by the 15 de Septiembre dam. Perceived inequality was mitigated by two factors. A combination of a lack of what Adam's referred to as a cosmopolitan upper class and the perception of "good *patronos*" among the provincial landed elite may have softened incentives to challenge local authority.³⁰⁸ More importantly, the perceived escape through land reform for some families engineered by Orlando Arevalo and CEL acted as an even more significant safety valve for social tensions.

The hydroelectric project was financed by the IDB and others when the political stability of the government was the most uncertain – providing an important infusion of capital at a time when the provisional governments of the early 1980s were descending into crisis. IDB records show that the Bank disbursement of \$125 million in 1982-83 was second only to

³⁰⁶ Carlos Soriano, ex-mayor of San Ildefonso, stated that CEL donated some of the land on the Usulután side of the bridge, although the displaced members of the new community, Vista Hermosa, were obliged to pay for the land and housing through a project financing facility. Interview, 5/24/05 and IDB (1985: 25).

³⁰⁷ Alas (2003) Accompanied by local priests, Chenchó and Higinio Alas, protests forced the project's temporary postponement. A small number of the 25,000 who would be displaced were resettled. However, the dam was built. As the water filled the reservoir in December 1976, a crisis was touched off when 250 peasants gathered at the hacienda Colima in Aguilarés to confront the Francisco and Eduardo Orellana, the principal landowners that benefited from the project. During the protest, Eduardo Orellana was accidentally shot. The circumstances of the shooting provoked an "eye for an eye" campaign of retribution by right wing death squads.

³⁰⁸ Although the earlier massacre may have had an effect.

USAID in terms of external finance that stabilized an economy that was spiraling downward.³⁰⁹ The costs of building a dam in the middle of a highly conflictive zone exceeded initial projects by nearly 50% or \$90 million – dwarfing the resources available for development within San Ildefonso. These expenses were attributed to vaguely accounted cost overruns by the principal construction contractor related to the extraordinary security provisions and inflationary spike in material expenses. The counter-insurgent cost overruns, including an airstrip in San Ildefonso to avoid any travel of project management by car were accepted by the IDB without question – undoubtedly influenced by the April, 1980 encounter between two Bank specialists and “*elementos subversivos*” on the Pan American highway in transit to the project site.³¹⁰

As disruptive as the dam may have been for some, it provided the obvious benefits for others that derive from major public works projects. One construction supervisor affiliated with the PDC found regular employment through small infrastructure projects associated with the dam construction. Another local landowner reportedly sold a parcel for an inflated price where the landing strip was built, and then married a construction executive and moved to Italy. Local restaurants and stores benefited from the local purchases of construction personnel, although few locals were placed in the skilled trades employed to build the dam. Combined with the modest relocation package offered by the state, these local benefits cushioned the potentially explosive effect the dam might have had.

Orlando Arevalo personified the personality of non-violent peasant social mobility that could be replicated through loyalty to the Christian Democrats.³¹¹ Arevalo’s family worked as *colonos* for Alfredo Marin on Hacienda Candelaria Lempa. As the oldest of seventeen children, nine of whom died during infancy, Arevalo worked as a boy picking cotton and as a general laborer for Marin. At age twelve, he was hospitalized for a year after injuring his left

³⁰⁹ IDB (1985: 3). <http://www.iadb.org/projects/Project.cfm?project=ES0022&Language=English>, accessed March 15, 2005. The IDB provided over \$500 million in project financing to the Salvadoran government between 1970 and 1983, some \$372 million of which came after 1977 when human rights violations by state security forces were highest.

³¹⁰ IDB (1985: 29). The government request for an additional \$70 million from the IDB, on top of the original \$90 million loan approved in 1977, came shortly after the incident.

³¹¹ The history of Orlando Arevalo was a subject that came up in many interviews. This section is based on interviews with Arevalo individuals in the communities of Divisadero, Mariadiga, Cumiste, Ahogadas, as well as on published interviews, eg. *La Prensa Gráfica*, Jan 10, 2000, <http://archive.laprensa.com.sv/20001001/enfoques/enf7.asp>, accessed March 15, 2005.

arm in a fall from a tree. Marin took an interest in Arevalo and facilitated his elementary education. At a young age, Arevalo assumed the position of *mandador* on another of Marin's properties, *Hacienda La Peleada*.³¹² When the reservoir was flooded and threatened to submerge the community of *Lindero*, Antonio Marin helped Arevalo and the other displaced families negotiate land that the government had acquired in the pre-land reform period and intended to sell (*Hacienda Miralempa*) – which now belongs to the municipality of San Vicente, but borders San Ildefonso.³¹³

Charismatic and connected to the local Christian Democrat party elite, Arevalo ascended the political ladder at a remarkable pace. At *Miralempa*, Arevalo organized the displaced families into a cooperative and joined the *Asociación Cooperativa de Products Agropecuarios Integrados* (ACOPAI). Arevalo soon became president of ACOPAI, a small cooperative association that split from the UCS in 1978 over ideological and strategic differences.³¹⁴ Newly elected President Duarte picked Arevalo to head the National Financial Institute for Agricultural Lands (FINATA), created to administer the Land to the Tiller program (Phase III) of the agrarian reform (1985-1989).³¹⁵ Arevalo was deposed as president of ACOPAI after a falling out over Duarte's economic policies toward unions and agriculture in 1986, and he established a parallel coalition which ultimately became the National Peasant Confederation (CNC).

In the 1991 elections, Arevalo was offered a spot on ARENA's national list of deputies, and accepted. Revealing a political skill that is been characteristic of his survival, Arevalo has been switching parties regularly since 1991. All the while, he has managed to remain the

³¹² Also referred to by some as La Galera.

³¹³ Arevalo claims that ACOPAI promoter, Marciano Ulloa, was involved with the relocation and cooperative formation in 1979. Lolo Melendez, Jr, former ACOPAI promoter and resident of Miralempa, estimates that 78 families were originally in Lindero, of a total 300 that were relocated from all three departments that would be flooded. Beneficiaries were offered 1 mz of land to be financed. Interview, 6/1/98

³¹⁴ ACOPAI is one of the smaller cooperative associations established around the time of the agrarian reform. At its peak, ACOPAI represented about 25 coops, with a maximum of 5,000 members. Forché and Wheaton (1981) argue ACOPAI resulted from a power struggle orchestrated by the AIFLD in 1978 that was led by Jorge Camacho, an embattled AIFLD client, when UCS traditional leaders, Rodolfo Viera and Tito Castro, were under scrutiny on corruption charges. At the same time, the UCS as beginning to distance itself from U.S. tutelage.

³¹⁵ Land to the Tiller transferred small rental properties less than 7 ha to independent farmers that farmed them. A full treatment of the land reform will be addressed in next chapter.

leader of a significant centrist peasant confederation, a most impressive feat in the treacherous terrain of agrarian politics. The CNC is the most visible legacy of the UCS, after many divisions and reformulations, a center-right peasant organization. Yet for agrarian issues of common concern, Arevalo's political influence has derived from his capacity to mobilize tens of thousands of poor rural dwellers upon command.

The trajectory of Arevalo, and families associated with ACOPAI and the Christian Democrats heightened local faith in the promise of the agrarian reform as a solution to rural conflict. Many more informants attributed the source of change between pre-war and post-war conditions to the agrarian reform than to the Peace Accords negotiated by the FMLN. Duarte, Arevalo and other PDC leaders retain tremendous respect among peasant farmers in San Ildefonso.

c. The events of March to September, 1980

ISTA, the UCS and ACOPAI were known in the region as word spread about the prospect of land reform in late 1979. Several nearby ISTA cooperatives had experienced half a decade of operation by 1980.³¹⁶ However, most of the *colonos* in the seven largest farms that were intervened by ISTA and FINATA after March 1980 were unorganized.³¹⁷ In effect, the land was simply turned over to them. Under the paternalist and often corrupt direction of ISTA staff, cooperatives were established and payments were collected, although few if any understood where the money went. The cooperatives would quickly fall into debt.

The property of Francisco Lazos and his sons Alvaro and Gilberto, was registered by FINATA as a Phase III land reform property. The cooperative was serviced by ACOPAI. Not long after its first harvest, a platoon of 30 PRTC combatants arrived in *San Francisco de la Cruz* on September 24, 1980, in search of suspected ORDEN collaborators.³¹⁸ One youth thought to be an informant was detained. The community was armed and resisted any attempts

³¹⁶ San Jose Los Almendros in Santa Clara; Villa Dolores; San Juan del Merino all began operating as coops with church assistance in the mid-1970s.

³¹⁷ In likely reciprocity to a "good patrono," only 10 hectares of land from the Marin family was intervened by FINATA.

³¹⁸ Interview Fermin Cortéz, Cooperative President, *San Francisco de la Cruz*, May 22, 1998.

by the PRTC commander to question or arrest community members. The tense standoff resulted in an exchange of gunfire that left two PRTC combatants dead. In response, the PRTC commander ordered the execution of four members of the cooperative, including the cooperative leader.

Various informants from the community and the FMLN have attributed the events in *San Francisco de la Cruz* to a mistaken tactical approach to the agrarian reform cooperatives and the lack of experience of the commander involved.³¹⁹ Early resistance was based on FMLN preference for expropriation without compensation of former owners. Cooperative leaders were also threatened by the landed elites and the military, which established protection rackets for the new cooperatives or assassinated cooperative leaders as well.

While some argued that improved leadership by the FMLN later in the war effectively repaired relations with the community, there is significant evidence to the contrary.³²⁰ The events pushed the cooperatives toward a commitment of neutrality in the conflict that found its deepest expression in the discourse of the PDC.

San Ildefonso, in the words of many, was a passive observer to the capricious and violent actions of two larger forces. The conflict was introduced from the outside, not from within. The preferred strategy was conflict avoidance, which translated during the war into passive collaboration with both insurgents and the military. The Christian Democrat reformist legacy left the deepest impression in the years leading up to the war, and no significant relationships were established with the FMLN or ARENA.

In San Ildefonso, we have the most clear cut example of Stoll's paradigmatic uncommitted community that strives to avoid the high risk identification with either the insurgents or the military. Untrusting of both, the majority viewed themselves as trapped between two fires while desperately allegiant to a non-violent reform alternative. However, as Stoll only acknowledges to a limited extent, not all fled to the perceived security of government

³¹⁹ Others suggested that the killings were ordered for personal rather than political reasons.

³²⁰ At some later point in the war (1984), the FMLN also reportedly executed seven suspected informers in the community of Las Canoas. Interview Carlos Soriano, Las Lajas and Genaro Henríquez, San Ildefonso, May, 1998. A leader for the cooperative at San Jose Los Almendros, in neighboring Apastepeque, which began in 1976, reported pressure as early as 1978-1979 from FMLN militants for cooperative members to incorporate. One coop leader was killed in 1981, and another in 1986. Interview, Lucio Adalberto Mendez, Cooperative President, Oct. 13, 1998,

controlled refuge. A small number did flee to the hills to join the insurgents or maintained a clandestine association for some part of the war. Nevertheless, particularly in the highland communities where the conflict was most intense, almost everyone fled at some point – and as we share see later, more people in San Ildefonso fled to other countries than the hard-line insurgent or counter-insurgent cases. So, in San Ildefonso we have a second variant on Stoll's narrative that provides both supporting and detracting evidence of the motivations for revolution, reform or counter-insurgent resistance.

The combination of FMLN sponsored executions of cooperative leaders and the deeply engrained influence of Christian Democrat personalities and institutions begins to explain the dominant political choices. To most in San Ildefonso, Napoleon Duarte and the PDC represented the preferred alternative to extreme violence on the right and armed insurrection on the left. As one local CNC promoter put it, “the PDC represented the moderate line, to fight with ideas and look for solutions without weapons, but rather through negotiation.”³²¹ This vague moral centrism and the prospect of selective benefits was entirely compatible with the appeal of the PDC in San Ildefonso. While significant gains are attributed to the PDC project, they stand in stark contrast to the prevailing poverty. Still, the perception remains that the centrist road was the only one worth choosing – so much so that when massive repression began in the early 1980s, the vast majority of the population fled to the cities, not to the hills as combatants.

At a local level, the political legacy of Orlando Arevalo was evident in terms of the reflexive and entrepreneurial form of political organizing that became the norm in San Ildefonso. Arevalo aptly demonstrated his skills as a leader as he emerged as one of the country's most visible peasant leaders by 1980. He rose through the ranks in the agrarian bureaucracy, defying explicit party affiliation but always adhering to a centrist philosophy. When the ARENA party controlled FINATA and ISTA offices and D'Aubuisson looked to ACOPAI to recruit a peasant candidate for the 1982 Constituent Assembly, Arevalo accepted but was too young to run.³²² When the Christian Democrats collapsed in the late 1980s, Arevalo had already agreed to terms with Cristiani and easily switched parties to serve several

³²¹ Interview Lolo Melendez, San Ildefonso, May 20, 1998

³²² Interview with Arevalo in *La Prensa Gráfica*, op cit. 2001

terms as an ARENA deputy. When political demands for his peasant base went unheard, Arevalo switched again to his current seat with PCN.

Views toward Arevalo vary. He is seen both as a pragmatic compromiser and a populist wholly lacking in principle. Most agree that he has retained credibility as a peasant leader as a result of years of channeling small projects to communities that support him, and at least initially, the PDC. For most in San Ildefonso, party identification was less important than the prospect for survival and gradualist incremental change. Transformative public goods were not of interest. However, the assiduous clientelist relationships with which Arevalo has kept himself afloat politically, reveals how local tolerance for populist and opportunist politics of that espoused by the Christian Democrats in the pre-war period informed the political action choices made by San Fonchanos over the long run.

Among the FMLN, the legacy of Duarte and agrarian reform failed in the sense that it delivered land, which is but one aspect of structural rural poverty, without altering the fundamental consciousness of the beneficiary population. Under the paternalist and corrupt tutelage of ISTA, the potential impact on the beneficiary population was lessened in not having organized to conquer land inequality. Those who did join the insurgency tend to attribute the lack of greater participation among the local population to the absence of base community organizing and the fear of both sides caused by mistaken policies toward cooperative communities. Reflecting its own contradictions, the FMLN was unable to provide an alternative strategy and the requisite actions to justify following it. Like the majority of Salvadorans on the eve of civil war, the PDC *chimbolitos* (or little fish symbolized by the party's icon) of San Ildefonso chose the middle path of least resistance.

To summarize, Figure 4.7 compares the key differences and similarities of these catalytic turning points in the paths toward insurgent or counter-insurgent empowerment. The events turned on variation between the case study contexts that can be subdivided into three areas (local organization, the nature of state repression, and local analysis of the violence), all of which contribute to collective choices toward an insurgent, counter-insurgent or neutral collective action choices.

The communities of *La Cayetana* and *León de Piedra* benefited from strong reciprocal ties and an accumulated prior experience of effective collective actions, compared to the rather atomized community relations in the other two cases that seemed to be dominated more by the

vertical ties each community had to a particular landlord. Tecoluca and Jiboa Valley communities enjoyed strong ties to the progressive and reactionary church leaders and institutions, respectively – compared to relatively less religious influence in San Ildefonso either way. Religious influence strengthened the hand of peasants in *La Cayetana* and weakened the potential support within *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*. By contrast, the deep support for the reactionary church closed space for CEB expansion and restricted the influence progressive Catholic clergy to a handful of communities and scattered families.

The influence of revolutionary organizations was limited to the FPL in *La Cayetana* and most of Tecoluca, but fragmented among three different factions in the Jiboa Valley. The PRTC was the decisive influence in the highland region of San Ildefonso, whose impact was not discernable until the onset of civil war. In somewhat of a mirror image, there existed a more palpable impact of the paramilitary organizations in the Jiboa Valley, particularly in the absence of any competing military counter-balance. Paramilitary organizing was present in Tecoluca although much more defensive as the FPL steadily armed itself. Paramilitary influence prior to the war was less visible in pre-war San Ildefonso, perhaps due to the lower level of conflict between landlords and peasants.

Finally, the clearest difference in pre-war local organizing in the three cases revolved around collective action toward land claims. In Tecoluca, beginning with *La Cayetana*, if not earlier, peasants organized to overtly take land from the most powerful and feared landlords and paid the price. Most peasants throughout the Jiboa Valley were not as willing as those killed in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* to take land. An accurate read of the local opportunity structure or not, this reluctance to openly challenge agrarian elites would mark future action choices. Many landless peasants in San Ildefonso also did not take land, but instead were satisfied to receive land from ISTA.

	Tecoluca	Jiboa Valley	San Ildefonso
	<i>La Cayetana</i> , (Nov. 29, 1974)	<i>San Pedro Aguas Calientes</i> , (March 23, 1980)	San Francisco de la Cruz, (Sept, 24, 1980)
Local Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong inter-community reciprocity ties • Successful prior CA experiences • Enduring, expansive network of CEBs and catechists • FPL revolutionary influence unchallenged by other factions • Paramilitary organizing challenged early by local insurgents • Land was taken by force, ISTA reforms were limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak inter-community reciprocity ties • Few successful CA experiences • Intermittent and circumscribed CEB/catechist influence • Fragmented revolutionary organizing between PRTC, PC, and FPL • Paramilitary organizing unchallenged and hegemonic • Land was neither taken nor given to any large degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate inter-community reciprocity ties • Few successful CA experiences • No evident CEB/catechist influence • PRTC influence began late and harmed local trust • Land was given by ISTA, not taken by peasants
State Repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelming, indiscriminate force by state security agents • Early in the cycle of state violence • Collective insurgent self-defense measures available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelming, indiscriminate force by state security agents • Later in the cycle of state violence • No collective, self-defense capacity • Organized counter-insurgent self-defense measures most decisive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest, targeted violence by the National Guard as well as the FMLN against cooperative leaders • Later in the cycle of state violence, early in the cycle of insurgent violence • Collective neutral self-defense measures available
Analysis of Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event became code for resistance and transformation • Amplified by legislative investigation • Blame assigned to landowners and state security forces • Reinforced collective conception of agrarian injustice and solutions • Highly politicized analysis of the war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic of the decay of peasant respect for rural authority and the defeat of rebellious impulses • Obscured in the public by larger events and the historic record • Equal blame assigned to the FMLN, state security forces and in some instances, the victims themselves • Individualist and apolitical critiques of agrarian injustice • Arbitrary & personalized nature of the violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected the capricious and violent actions of two larger forces • Relegated to the semi-public record of insurgent oral history, yet to be written or redressed. • Conflict was introduced from the outside, blame is placed with FMLN • Reinforced passive observer/collaborator strategy
Preferred Empowerment Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confrontational zero-sum path of armed revolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of coerced and voluntary counter-insurgent resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrist path of conflict avoidance, translated during the war into passive collaboration with both insurgents and the military

Figure 4.7 Summary of Key Differences and Similarities Between Momentous Turning Points in Case Study Paths to Insurgent or Counter-Insurgent Empowerment

Two key differences distinguish the impact of repression. In Tecoluca and the Jiboa Valley, the private landowners called in state security forces to send a strategic signal to all local peasants that organized resistance would be met with overwhelming force. It was early enough in the cycle of state violence that the growing political maturity in Tecoluca had not been worn down by escalating state retaliation. The fact that neighboring communities failed to rally in defense of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* is at least in part due to the five year interim experience of observed deterioration in the human rights climate that changed the prevailing risk analysis. A capacity for local self-defense can mitigate the effect of violence and the temporal difference should have worked in the reverse direction, favoring *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*. Yet, the Jiboa Valley experience reflects a much weaker self-defense capacity despite the advantage of five additional years to prepare.

The San Ildefonso case is different from both in that the community of San Francisco de la Cruz was attacked by PRTC. Moreover, the goal of the attack involved a locally popular reform. Rather than an overwhelming demonstration of force, the rebels were limited to only a modest threat that was barely superior to a significant local self-defense capacity. This relative parity in terms of military superiority is in part responsible for the stand off and resulting shoot out. This balance of power between the communities of San Ildefonso and the PRTC forced both sides to consider more accommodative co-existence strategies as an alternative to their primary preferences.

Not surprisingly, subjective analyses of the violence varied in each case. The massacre in *La Cayetana* became a codeword for revolutionary heroism and entered the FMLN pantheon of cultural referents for pre-war social injustice. The amplification of the story of *La Cayetana* and placement of responsibility squarely with the local landlords and National Guard was facilitated in part by the high profile legislative investigation of the crime, albeit without any legal consequence for the Angulo family or the local Guard. Five years hence, the massacre in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* was obscured by the open floodgate of killing that was underway in 1980. The assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero the following day ensured that the victims of the Jiboa Valley death squads would pass into anonymity as the level of killing reached an astonishing 75 homicides per day. Although survivors know and have reported details of the event to human rights organizations, this massacre that occurred within full view of Cristiani's residence is barely known to the public. Lesser known still are the details of the

exchange between young PRTC commanders and defiant cooperative leaders in San Francisco de la Cruz, Las Canoas and elsewhere that ended the lives of civilian peasant farmers in San Ildefonso. In the Jiboa Valley, the absence of a public record has allowed the event to symbolize the inevitable consequence when respect is lost for traditional rural authority. In San Ildefonso, the local knowledge of the killing of cooperative leaders merely underscores the prevailing suspicion most held toward violent solutions to agrarian problems where the majority in this region preferred passive collaboration with both sides to avoid identification with either.

In each case, the violence reinforced a local conception of the agrarian injustice and the possible menu of solutions that underwrote the competing empowerment strategies that guided them through the war and have subsequently shaped post-war institutions. In Tecoluca, *La Cayetana* provided proof that through unified and contentious resistance, peasants can break the straightjacket of structural inequality. Empowerment through conflict would therefore involve a zero-sum exchange of power that would in turn require armed self-defense. In the Jiboa Valley, *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* meant many different things to different people, ultimately revealing a composite of highly personalized and largely apolitical understandings of the violence. This vacuum of permissiveness enabled a hard-line counter-insurgent empowerment strategy to invite peasants to trade loyalty for survival while leaving the highly skewed local power relations essentially intact. In San Ildefonso, the violence hardened the population's aversion toward both of these war empowerment strategies and therefore pushed them into the majority position of negotiating neutrality through limited, passive collaboration with either side.

Together, these three cases of repression illustrate a significant variability in the factors associated with political violence that challenges the generalizability of Stoll's claims about rebellion, repression and insurgent influence. In other words, my analysis of how peasant insurgency unfolded in the paracentral region should raise suspicion about any national level explanation that homogenizes sub-national distinctions. If anything, rural guerilla movements are not best understood simply as a response to government or insurgent repression, as Wickham-Crowley has argued, although that was certainly present in each case (Wickham-Crowley 1992: 41). Instead, they turn on other factors that vary between the cases, including the types of marginal elites to which local people have access and the intensity of agrarian

dislocation. Tecoluca, the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso were all victimized by state or insurgent violence and reacted differently. These differences are sharpened more profound as the war unfolds. Despite noted limitations in the evidence supporting each case, this variability may be rooted in the very real difference between otherwise similar country cases of peasant rebellion or questions regarding the type of evidence brought to bear in comparative inquiry.

F. CONCLUSION

These episodes of pre-war collective action provide a glimpse of how such strategies are crucial for understanding how development policies such as decentralization avoid the pitfalls of political capture under conditions of severe inequality and weak democratic institutions. This chapter has explored how historical patterns of mobilization or demobilization of peasant unrest begin to help us understand the present context for decentralized development. Peasants were mobilized by both insurgent and counter-insurgent political forces, but what was the lasting effect of these experiences on empowerment strategies during the war, and in turn how people deal with obstacles to the collective action problem in the post-war context.

The chapter has outlined historical sketches of the three municipal case studies, with particular emphasis on three central variables in the political opportunity for local empowerment (agrarian structure, elite access and state repression). I have argued that these factors define to a large degree the political opportunity structure within which strategic action choices were made in the years leading up to full scale civil war. In turn, the types of local mobilization or individual strategic actions chosen to survive the increasingly violent years leading up to the war begin to distinguish the various competing empowerment strategies that emerge from this pre-war political opportunity structure.

Severe, enduring agrarian inequality was deepened by the modernization and export orientation of production. Agrarian inequality was responsible for the marginalization of a peasant labor force that had only years earlier been subsisting as *colonos* in relatively stable relations with area landowners. The export boom modernized the rural economy, and consumed all available land – intensifying landlessness and insecurity. Growing economic anxiety and intransigence within the landed elite blocked all meaningful political and economic

reform initiatives. These shifts reshaped long-standing peasant-landlord relations and disempowered the rural poor in the pre-war period.

Two main catalysts explain how the poor reacted. Access to political and religious elites and experiences of specific and diffuse violence altered the political opportunity structure and shaped how solutions were found to collective action problems through trust, coordination, and political mobilization. The progressive Catholic Church and revolutionary organizations provided elite leadership for channeling rural and urban grievances toward conflictive mobilization tactics. The indifference by the global community, particularly the U.S., in the 1970s to growing repression only polarized the strategies of the extreme right and left. Brief interruptions in the pragmatic U.S. and IFI alliance with increasingly intolerant PCN military regimes failed to mollify either side or open any space for electoral alternatives to civil war.

In all three case study municipalities, crucial events illustrate how these factors converged to shape the choices taken by people confronting a formidable decision. Challenging, stabilizing or accommodating strategies were available. However, the circumstances help explain why different choices were made in each municipality.

In Tecoluca, where four to five years of building Christian base communities and a parallel effort to recruit and train insurgent cadre preceded the first shock of massive repression, as illustrated in episode of *La Cayetana*, the movement to challenge the rural order was strengthened. In the Jiboa Valley, where the impact of the popular church was isolated and reactionary political forces found a strong following, an episode of massive repression was capable of annihilating any base of resistance to the prevailing coffee oligarchy. In San Ildefonso, a combination of weak religious influence and insurgent violence toward a widely supported cooperative movement closed off potential participation in an active challenge to local inequality or a counter-insurgency. Instead, an allegiance to the personalities and accommodative policies of the Christian Democrats, and in particular, the promise of agrarian reform, was reinforced.

The emergence of religious and political leaders in opposition to the oligarchy and the military created space for rural organizations to effectively challenge local inequality. The CEB movement is notable for several reasons. First, it transformed attitudes of fatalism and deference that the church had long cultivated among the faithful. People were given an instrument to articulate opposition to injustice that subjected all authority to careful critique.

Second, it achieved an impressive level of coordination while at the same time shifting authority into the hands of the laity. Where progressive Catholicism took hold, individual attitudes toward social change were altered, and communal experiments unbound to any institution began to challenge rural injustice. This skill formation process was adaptable to the changing context of the Salvadoran countryside and soon outpaced even the limits set by the priests leading the process. Out of this process came organizations such as the UTC and FECCAS that represented the most profound challenge to the rural status quo. When elite intransigence and revolutionary demands eclipsed any tenable strategy for pacific reform, CEB communities invested in measures for collective self-defense and many catechists and lay leaders made the natural transition to some form of active collaboration with organizations engaged in armed struggle. This destination was not pre-determined, but the process of empowerment through conflict on which it was based never foreclosed such an option.

Reactionary clergy and state security forces also mobilized peasants, although the orientation could not have been more different. Counter-insurgent organizing placed a premium on the secret surveillance of one's neighbors and coerced service in the defense of the elite dominated rural order. ORDEN militants often participated in local terrorist acts against civilian opposition organizations. The direction of ORDEN remained ensconced in a paramilitary command structure that was clientelist and anti-democratic in nature. Within a climate of fear and intimidation, this type of rural mobilization served to stabilize a highly unequal pre-war landlord-peasant social contract.

The PDC and USAID attempted to orient a segment of the peasant sector into the neutral center. The UCS and its progeny, ACOPAI, adhered for long periods to the Christian Democrat fallacy of neutrality in the years leading to civil war, although chafing at the U.S. hold in the late 1970s. In the end, however, these peasant organizations became the champions of a modest agrarian reform carried out by a chastened and conservative Christian Democratic leadership that was increasingly dependent and doomed to capitulate to an extremist U.S. counter-insurgent policy.

Experiences in *La Cayetana*, *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* and various parts of San Ildefonso reveal the roots of these emerging empowerment strategies. Each case suggests how choices within specific political opportunity structures have acted as the historical switchman that dispatched entire communities on different development paths, driven by different

empowerment strategies that would shape local institutions and development outcomes twenty years hence.

V. CHAPTER FIVE: DECENTRALIZATION FROM BELOW II – EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES FORGED IN THE FURNACE OF CIVIL WAR, 1980-1992

By 1979, the structures of what political and social stability remained in El Salvador were crumbling. A tyrannical regime under the command of President and Colonel Carlos Humberto Romero was under increasing pressure from the U.S. to soften its attacks on the left and from the right to intensify its crackdown on all political opposition. Choices made during the 1970s, a decade of increasingly restrictive conditions in Tecoluca, the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso, set each of these communities in motion on decidedly different tracks as the space for non-violent politics collapsed. The context for politics was radically and permanently altered by the civil war that engulfed the country for the next twelve years. During this period, the process of empowerment and disempowerment that had been initiated by the pre-war clash of social forces was reinforced. When the political war ended in 1992, the experiences that distinguished those individuals and communities that chose revolution, reform or reactionary counter-insurgent defense of the status quo would be so profoundly rooted that they would shape the expectations and behaviors of a generation of Salvadorans that came of age in these years. For better or worse, these political wartime experiences are the decisive attributes of local development in most conflictive rural communities today.

In this chapter, I trace how the three factors of the political opportunity structure of pre-war El Salvador (agrarian structure, elite access and repression) help us understand the competing empowerment strategies deployed by the FMLN and the military-government during the 1980s and how people in the case study communities responded to them.

Agrarian injustice, political intolerance and the impunity of the elite directed security forces precipitated a civil war in El Salvador, during which decentralized mobilization strategies were necessitated by the sheer scope, duration and intensity of the conflict. During the civil war, the Salvadoran countryside was governed by two parallel states, two political-

economic systems, and in turn, two competing conceptions of citizen empowerment. A twenty year insurgency brought with it a transforming process that rendered the pre-war authority structure, and associated agrarian land structure on which it rested, null and void. Landlords and many rural officials were expelled from the countryside. Large segments of the progressive church and political opposition to military rule were driven underground. One in every four Salvadorans was uprooted. Hundreds of thousands journeyed to other countries, expanding the theater of the conflict as politics followed them. The political-military machinery of the government and the FMLN experienced qualitative leaps in their respective capacities and contested the influence of the rural Salvadoran population. This influence and capacity extended through transnational solidarity networks, inserting Salvadoran reality indelibly into the international consciousness.

However much the war extended Salvadoran politics beyond national borders, the fulcrum of the war remained local and largely rural. As U.S. advisor, Colonel Waghelstein put it, “the only territory you want to hold is the six inches between a *campesino*’s ears.”³²³ Over the course of the civil war, competing insurgent and counter-insurgent strategies experimented with new institutions and governance rules at the local level to win peasant sympathies. Within zones of military control, the authoritarian character of government rule was unabashedly top-down, ruthless, and opposed to any civic participation that served no counter-insurgent function. The conscription of soldiers and coerced service of civil patrols, the revival of municipal government and state managed agrarian reform cooperatives served as the three fundamental pillars of the government counter-insurgency focus on local populations as a buffer against FMLN recruitment.

Within zones of FMLN control, command was also vertical but notably different in the self-imposed limits set on this power. FMLN authority derived from an underlying respect for human dignity, the delegation of governance authority to local populations and the goal of equity in property redistribution. The asymmetric nature of the conflict forced insurgent commanders to delegate responsibilities and decision making power to the thousands of community organizers, and the masses of peasants, women, elderly, and children that supported

³²³ Speech by Col. John Waghelstein, “Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) in the Post Vietnam Period,” Jan. 17, 1985, American Enterprise Institute, cited in Schwarz (1991: 22), see also Waghelstein (1985), Manwaring and Prisk (1988, 1990) and Bacevitch (1998).

them. While many of these new leaders transitioned from pre-war roles as catechists, students, and peasant union leaders, their experiences during the war required new skills and often the ascription of multiple identities. As militia, popular local governments, independent cooperatives, repopulation movements, and eventually NGOs, insurgent populations invented new local institutions to survive and resist the government efforts to re-establish pre-war agrarian relations. As such, the collective experiences in FMLN controlled zones involved significant increases in the confidence of opposition communities. At the same time, they were punctuated by deep fissures of distrust and suspicion that were a legacy of clandestine organizing, betrayal and the suffering of gross acts of violence.

Sustained co-existence of these alternative models of local development within various regions of the same country provides the perfect setting for assessing how sharply distinct political experiences have influenced competing notions of empowerment that in turn have deeply marked the institutionalization of local authority in NGOs, municipal governments and grassroots organizations (CSOs) in the post-war period.

In effect, decentralization occurred in both insurgent and counter-insurgent controlled and contested zones as de facto governance strategies where the war had destroyed prevailing structures of rule. Municipal government was revived and NGOs were invented as political necessities in a climate of violence and struggle for the sympathies of the Salvadoran population. Decentralized rule was essential because the heightened stakes of winning or sustaining the allegiance of rural “hearts and minds” led to the authentic or apparent empowerment of local populations to set their own terms for participation.

Both types of local institutions, to differing degrees, were instruments for political capture by competing parties to the conflict. Before the war, the few NGOs did not get involved in politics and mayors discharged a narrow political mandate set by local landowning elites in the ruling party. Preserving the stability of agrarian inequality was the paramount goal. The onset of political democratization as well as the rather slow, methodical process of discovery that had been possible within Christian base communities and rural peasant unions, were strangled early by military repression, which then escalated to a full-blown and bloody contest over national power and property rights. The civil war brought both change and continuity. Some communities had leadership and capacity forged over a decade of training and collective action, others were swept into the chaos with little preparation or understanding

at all. In either context, local institutions were endowed with unprecedented responsibilities and authority. Tempered by this conflict, competing visions and capacities for local development and democracy were both forged in the furnace of civil war.

This analysis of the Salvadoran civil war departs somewhat from the view held by some that the nature of experiences of FMLN combatants were overwhelmingly authoritarian and non-democratic.³²⁴ While this was undoubtedly true for the experiences of some, the relatively little evidence that we have about the diversity of self-governing experiences under FMLN rule in conflictive zones tells a considerably different story. The insurgent collective action strategy during the war was much more dependent upon the voluntarism of its supporters and combatants than a hierarchical imposition of conduct. The post-war experience of FMLN rule has tended to be surprisingly innovative and democratic at the local level, although regressing at times toward a central command mode of decision making at the national level – aspects of empowerment that cannot be explained without recognition of accumulated capacity for democratic self-rule during the war.

This chapter will proceed in four sections. First, I examine the question of who rebelled and who did not, what each choice meant, and in turn contributed to the correlation of political force at the outset of the civil war. In the next three sections, I describe what the experiences of joining the rebels, the counter-resistance or staying neutral had on local governance. I describe in three stages, the evolution of insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies and their respective influence on the emergence and orientation of local institutions. During the “high intensity conflict” period (1980-1984), the FMLN experimented with *Poderes Populares Locales* (PPLs), while the civilian-military regime attempted to stabilize rural unrest by implementing an agrarian reform. In the “low-intensity conflict” stage of the war (1984-1989), I explain how empowerment strategies then shifted as a result of the electoral success of the Christian Democrats and the ebb in international support. The combination of a formidable air war with a U.S. designed civilian pacification scheme (CONARA/Municipalities in Action), forced the FMLN to break up its battalions into smaller, more coordinated but independent mobile units, and renew the focus on political organizing and refugee land repopulations. Finally, I conclude by depicting how the invention of NGOs, while not new to El Salvador, was

³²⁴ See Schwarz (1991) for a summary of these views.

at the center of insurgent and counter-insurgent preparations for peace in the years between 1990-1992, setting the stage for a new chapter of political struggle in the post-war period.

A. WHO REBELLED AND WHY?

1. Correlation of force at the outset of the war

By the late 1970s, the social movements in opposition to the military regime overflowed the channels of the progressive church that had guided its path for the first half of the decade. As the persecution of priests and laity intensified, the direction of the opposition assumed a decidedly military form. Although some factions of the left continued to pursue an electoral strategy, the escalation of violence under the regime of General Romero (1977-1979) forced many popular organizations to opt for the route of military conflict. Preparation began with training to provide defense for the confluence of strikes, land and government office takeovers, and sabotage of property and protest marches from growing state repression. At the same time, the convergence between military and popular protest infused these “civic” actions with greater organization and aggressiveness.

The strategy of the Romero government was to disarticulate the popular organizations that had gathered strength under the wavering reforms of the Molina government. Before 1977, guerrilla attacks numbered fewer than 50, killing several dozen members of the security forces (Gibb (2000: 49). Huge mass organizations shielded the smaller revolutionary groups that would become the FMLN, which by 1978-1979, were capable of only pinpoint attacks, removing National Guard posts, and expelling government informants from rural villages. At a national level, kidnappings and assassination of the business elite rattled the establishment and funded logistical preparations for an eventual insurgent military offensive.³²⁵

³²⁵ Montgomery estimates that \$65 million was accumulated in ransom from a string of about 25 high profile kidnappings (1995: 117)

Five revolutionary organizations formed in the 1970s, distinguished by strategic and tactical goals that had little bearing on their appeal to rural populations. Each of the five competed for recruits and recognition, which was reflected in the growth and fracturing of civil society into parallel networks of mass organizations, unions, student, peasant, mothers and women's groups. FECCAS and the UTC, the two principal peasant organizations deeply rooted in the base community movements of San Vicente and the region to the north of San Salvador, merged to form the *Bloque Popular Revolucionario* (BPR) in 1975. The actions of the *Bloque Popular Revolucionario* were closely aligned with the Forces for Popular Liberation (FPL). Together with other mass organizations, public protests were coordinated by the political-military leadership of the five revolutionary organizations, each jousting for superiority but all clearly lacking the means to mount any serious threat to Romero government.

In Tecoluca, the emergence of the FPL was inseparable from the ascent of the *Union de Trabajadores de Campo*. Within the UTC, leaders were elected, assemblies voted, and the voice of the individual campesino was heard. Here, initial experiences with collective decision making on policy proposals and political actions extended the base community process further and honed the skills of local peasant leaders in the practice of democratic procedures.

The first FPL combatant died in Tecoluca during an accidental shootout with a local farm foreman in July, 1974 as militias were forming throughout the volcano communities. As political space closed, scores joined clandestine FPL cells. On May 7, 1977, an ambush by five FPL combatants of a National Guard truck near the village of Santa Lucía, overlooking Zacatecoluca recovered the very first G-3 military rifles in the zone.³²⁶ During this period, militants from other regions started arriving for training in a dozen encampments on the *Chinchontepec* volcano.

A series of coordinated land takeovers by the UTC were organized with meticulous and unprecedented coordination between civilian and military groups. The land actions were both a

³²⁶ Interviews with FPL combatants now living in Tecoluca that participated in the assault, Pablo Anaya, Nueva Tehuacan, Tecoluca; Carlos Urbina, La Florida, "Trini," Las Pampas, Tecoluca (1998). The presentation of these arms, like other significant advances in the insurgency, was celebrated in a midnight gathering of several thousand people. Urbina noted that the next attack was much less successful. An attempted ambush of a convoy of National Guard near KM-51 of the Panamerican highway (above Verapáz) was surrounded by two nearby Guard contingents. Two of the three recently capture G-3 rifles were lost, in addition to a machine gun and three of the eighteen insurgents.

political gesture as well as a test of the movement's self-defense tactics, which in this instance prevented massacres by the National Guard.³²⁷ Armed FPL militants not only accompanied the collective actions of the UTC and Bloque, but began executing notorious death squad members. In early 1977, the FPL killed Tecoluca PCN mayor, Atilio Cañas. These events signaled a growing confidence and capacity among opposition communities in Tecoluca.

Counter-revolutionary tactics were also stepped up, although a division emerged between the soft and hard-line right. The Carter administration was generally reluctant to intervene more directly in El Salvador. This changed after the Sandinistas took power in Nicaragua in July 1979. The U.S. government temporarily blocked the IDB loan to fund the 15 of September hydroelectric dam for six months as the human rights situation deteriorated under Romero in 1977. Avoidance of another Nicaragua with U.S. elections on the horizon led to greater U.S. involvement. These hopes remained tied to the hopes of the Christian Democrats despite the isolation of most of its national leadership that had been forced into exile. Within the centrist camp of popular organizations, the moderate UCS now claimed 120,000 members but was experiencing an internal crisis associated with the alleged corruption of its leaders and the temporary loss of external funding from the Inter-American Foundation in 1977.³²⁸

Pushed to the center as the eventual champion of the U.S. inspired land reform, the shakeup within the UCS was mitigated by the return to El Salvador of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) after the 1979 coup. However, the U.S. had contradictory interests during this period that included negotiations with supposedly moderate military officers to fend off the extreme right and a more scaled back program of land reform than the first provisional government had envisioned. These contradictions were exacerbated

³²⁷ El Porvenir, owned by the Nunez family, was reported as the first toma, followed by La Sabana, San Bartolo, San Carlos in the south of Tecluca, and El Flor and Pichiche in neighboring Zacatecoluca. The cotton harvest was burned in Zamorran in 1978. Interview, Jose Audelio Diaz, Tecoluca

³²⁸ John Strasma, "Union Comunal Salvadorense: Summary of Findings and Recommendations," San Salvador, Aug. 10, 1977 and correspondence to AIFLD and the U.S. Embassy, cited in Wheaton and Forché (1981) The notes by Strasma indicate concerns about misappropriation of funds within the UCS between 1974-1977 under Tito Castro, and suggests that the Inter-American Foundation was aware of the problem but failed to intervene. These issues were apparently put on the backburner to facilitate the higher priority of "smoothing the path for the entrance of AIFLD."

by the radicalization of elements within the UCS, although many remained loyal to AIFLD leadership with hopes of acquiring land.

The hard-line anti-Communist right pushed the government to respond to rebel provocations and surging social unrest with more indiscriminate violence. After quashing earlier attempted land reforms, the paramilitary forces of the right targeted progressive clergy and unleashed a campaign of intimidation and terror in conflictive areas. In Tecoluca, Fr. Rafael Barahona was captured and tortured by the security forces and Fr. David Rodríguez was forced into clandestinity on charges that he was involved in the murder of Atilio Cañas. Two other priests, Fr. Cosme Spezzoto of San Juan Nonualco and Fr. Alirio Macías of San Estében Catarina in the northern half of San Vicente were killed by death squads.

Rodríguez eventually resurfaced joining his brother Benigno in the town of Villa Dolores, just to the north of San Ildefonso in 1979. There the Rodríguez brothers resumed their pastoral efforts to reorient conservative peasant attitudes toward social justice, but found that the events leading to war were moving much faster than the local population was prepared to engage. Unlike Tecoluca, and much more like the Jiboa Valley, the level of consciousness about liberation theology was thin when war erupted. The lack of any foundation of collective struggle in the area around Villa Dolores and prevailing suspicions of leftist reform proposals among the urban elites as experienced during interrupted sermons in San Ildefonso, left these municipalities susceptible to the terror campaigns of the National Guard. Over the coming years, most would come to feel they had become as several people described, “objects that were batted back and forth between opposing sides to a struggle to which they were never a party.”³²⁹

During the two and half years of escalating violence under President Romero, the security forces, ORDEN and the paramilitary right transitioned from isolated episodes of brutality to extended sweeping operations of intimidation and massacres. As the PCN lost its footing as the de facto party of the military, a new political movement emerged from the frustrations of the extreme right to stabilize its monopoly on the national franchise. The National Republican Alliance (ARENA) was created by Major Roberto d’Aubuisson, the former head of ANSESAL (the state intelligence agency and reputed death squad command center), d’Aubuisson had been stripped of his military career along with some of the most

³²⁹ Interviews with farmers in the villages of Las Ahogadas and Cumiste, San Ildefonso (October, 1998)

notorious human rights abusers by the first provisional junta in October 1979. Reorganizing the rural rank and file of ORDEN (which had also been dissolved by the first junta) into the *Frente Democrático Nacionalista* and appealing to the deep pockets of the most intransigent elite defenders of the pre-war status quo, d'Aubuisson came to personify the deeply engrained intolerance for change that so came to characterize the bloody class war he and his allies carried out against the poor in El Salvador.³³⁰

One of the closest allies of d'Aubuisson was Ernesto Angulo, extended family of the patriarch of Tecoluca, Nicolás Angulo. Like many other landed elites facing the loss of land and prestige, the Angulo family pledged their allegiance to d'Aubuisson's dirty war strategy from the outset. d'Aubuisson's origins were modest by comparison. He appealed to Angulo in similar economic desperation when his twenty year career in the Salvadoran military was unceremoniously ended by the reformist military officers under pressure from the U.S.. Angulo and d'Aubuisson saw in each other the solution to their respective problem. Like other elites, the Angulos needed a private army to restore landowner property, prestige and provide protection. d'Aubuisson, who would eventually marry into the Angulo family after the divorce of his first wife, needed the landowner resources to fund and restore legitimacy to his dirty war against the left. ARENA emerged from this marriage of convenience as the vehicle that would do both.

Leading up to the outbreak of war, a variation in mobilization strategies can be traced along three distinct trajectories that were reinforced during the next decade. On the left, disillusionment with the limitations of electoral strategies inspired by the Christian Democrats was steered by the progressive church to more profound demand-making that was intended to improve livelihoods for all of the rural poor. Confronted by state repression, those associated experiences of with popular democracy and collective struggle of the Catholic left chose alliances with the revolutionary groups, first in the mass organizations and then to varying

³³⁰ Declassified State Department documents indicate that D'Aubuisson received support from extreme anti-communist groups in Argentina, Venezuela and "six enormously wealthy former landowners who lost estates in Phase I of the agrarian reform," and whom had assets that were estimated to be in the range of \$200-500 million. Cited in Byrne (2000: 58) based on U.S. Declassified Documents I, Department of State, ER 4b vol. "Millionaires' Murder Inc.?" telegram #00096, from U.S. Embassy, San Salvador to Secretary of State, 6 Jan. 1981. See also former CIA official's dossier on established links between D'Aubuisson and death squad activity in El Salvador. http://www.serendipity.li/cia/death_squads.htm, accessed April 2005.

degrees as combatants. At the center, the Christian Democrats ultimately allied with U.S. reformers to fend off challenges from the extreme right and left, although they ended up allying with the former. Bankrolled by the U.S., the PDC exercised influence over the UCS, and reinforced their pursuit of incremental political change and land reform. These goals became transformed into increasingly selective and inadequate benefits to only a fraction of the rural population.

On the right, the elite – military – government triumvirate that had served as a rural protection racket for the landed oligarchy was reinvented as a modern political movement (ARENA) with a strong rural base (ORDEN) and no apprehensions about defending the prevailing property rights. ORDEN's reformulation into the rural base of ARENA was exclusive with regard to counter-revolutionary obligations and loyalties in return for highly selective benefits in the form of employment, access to land, security and general social mobility.

In October, 1979, three months after the Sandinistas took power in neighboring Nicaragua, the U.S. urged Romero to step down. Soon after, a reformist faction of junior military officers staged a peaceful coup that ousted Romero and about 100 other military officials. The provisional government initially included members of the political left, but endured less than three months. Declarations of land reform and other reforms were criticized as excessive by the extreme right and insufficient by the revolutionary left. As the U.S. attempted to hold together a second, then a third provisional government, opposition protests reached a high water mark when on January 22, 1980, an estimated 200,000 people demonstrated for change, representing nearly 8% of total adult population.³³¹

The signature moment in the descent into war was the murder of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero on March 25, 1980 by a gunman hired by extreme right paramilitaries. The crescendo of outrage that followed the assassination and massacre of fifty more observers at Romero's funeral a week later represented perhaps the only moment during the ensuing twelve year civil war in which a popular insurrection was possible. Yet, strategic divisions between the five revolutionary organizations and the severe lack of arms allowed the moment to pass.

³³¹ El Salvador has seen its share of large protest marches. Consider that an estimated 80,000 marched in San Salvador on May Day in 1930 during the coffee crisis that preceded the 1932 rebellion, or about 10% of the country's adult population at the time. Anderson (1981).

Instead, the announced land reform began and the third provisional government under the symbolic civilian leadership of Napoleon Duarte was provided valuable time to consolidate his fragile hold on power. As the left struggled to unify for war, the right unleashed the bloodiest sustained violence of the twelve year conflict. In May of 1980 alone, the murder rate reached 50 per day. By the end of the year, 13,000 Salvadorans, mostly civilians, had been killed.

On January 10, 1981, just days before the inauguration of President Reagan, the newly formed FMLN initiated its “final offensive,” attempting to trigger a popular insurrection to overthrow the fledgling provisional government. Attacks were launched in 39 different areas of the country by some 6,000 rebel combatants. In the paracentral zone, the offensive included strikes by insurgent squads ranging from 5 to 40 people over several days against the military and National Guard posts and military garrisons in Tecoluca, Zacatecoluca, San Vicente, San Esteban Catarina, San Nicolás Lempa, San Marcos Lempa, the Littoral highway, Villa Dolores and Chirilagua.

The military correlation of fighting force at this moment generally favored the government. Unable to spark a massive popular uprising during the 1981 offensive followed by the spike in U.S. military aid, the force correlation would not improve. As shown in Table 5.1, in 1981 better armed government combatants (regulars, police and National Guard) outnumbered FMLN combatants by about 10 to 1.³³² While less than a third of all FMLN combatants were armed, many with rustic hunting rifles or pistols, the offensive lasted about a week and proved to be an important test of strength for both sides.³³³ FMLN losses for January 1981 offensive were estimated between 500-1000 (6-11.5% of total forces) and for the FAES,

³³² In the 1932 attacks, according to Brockett (1992) and Anderson (1971), 500 peasants stormed the towns of Juayua, Nahuizalco, Sonsonate; up to 1400 attacked Ahuachapán, 1800 attacked Tacuba. As the counterattack mounted, some 5,000 rebels regrouped at Tacuba and a like number at Sonzacate.

³³³ Various estimates have been given of FMLN strength at the moment of the Jan. 1981 offensive. Nicolás García estimates 6,000 armed combatants and another 6,000 minimally trained and prepared to use arms. He also suggested that entire battalions of as many as 300 combatants shared only a handful of military weapons. RN Commander Raúl Hercules estimated that in nearby Guazapa in early 1981, there were 300-400 combatants but only 60 rifles. (Montgomery 1995: 117). U.S. State Department “White Paper” vastly misrepresented FMLN capacity. Robert Kaiser in Gettelman, et al. (1982: 261), cites State Dept Document 83 that in 1981, the FMLN had only 626 weapons for more than 9,000 men.

122 killed, 195 wounded.³³⁴ Politically, the offensive led to the official recognition of the FMLN as a belligerent force by Mexico and France later that year.

The U.S. would pour as much as \$1 million per day to expand the Salvadoran military by almost tenfold by 1992. By contrast, FMLN combatant forces would peak at 12,000-14,000 in the mid-1980s, and rely thereafter increasingly on militia. Total government combat deaths likely exceeded 15,000, while FMLN combat deaths probably totaled no more than 10,000. If we assume that an average of the high and low total estimates of war deaths between 1979-1992 of about 83,000, the total combat deaths of 25,000 represents only 30% of this total.

³³⁴ Bosch (1999: 105), Clodfelter (1992: 1175), See also the Table in Appendix F.1 of this chapter, which updates a summary of the estimates of military and civilian deaths and casualties in the civil war.

Table 5.1 Correlation of Military Force, El Salvador 1980-1992³³⁵

FMLN	Cumulative Combat Deaths (1980-1992)	Combatants	Militia	Civilian Base*	Refugees (Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá and Belize)*	Military Total
1980	658	3,500-6,000	5,000	20,000	0	8,500- 11,000
1981	2,258	3,700-15,000	5,000	80,000	5,000	13,700- 25,000
1984	5,691	12,000- 14,000	10,000	500,000	25,000- 40,000	22,000- 24,000
1988	9,829	7,000	40,000 ³³⁶	500,000	37,000	47,000
1992	13,163	8,552-11,000	20,000 ³³⁷	500,000	N/A	28,552- 31,000
FAES	Cumulative Combat Deaths (1980-1992)	Military Regulars	Police & National Guard	Paramilitaries & Reserves	Military Total	
1980	3,477	10,000	6,000	100,000	116,000	
1981	4,278	16,000	7,500	100,000	123,500	
1984	9,553	42,000	9,500	100,000	151,500	
1988	12,774	47,000	12,500	100,000	159,500	
1992	16,140	63,175	14,000	100,000 ³³⁸	177,175	

³³⁵ Cumulative Combatant Deaths do not include estimates of civilian deaths, which could have been as high as 70,000 during the twelve year period, only reported combatant deaths. See Table 1 notes in Seligson and McElhinny (1996). Refugees refer to the camps set under international supervision in Honduras and within certain parts of San Salvador, but included displaced populations that were considered aligned with the FMLN. The Treasury Police operated under the Defense Ministry. Government paramilitaries include ORDEN/FDN, civil defense units, and death squads. Table 5.1 is adapted from Seligson and McElhinny (1996, Table 1). FMLN combat deaths are based on government estimates, with some corrections. FAES combat deaths are an average of government and FMLN estimates. FMLN estimates for civilian and refugee base totals are considered logistical support, but not included as military support.

³³⁶ Schwarz (1991: 78)

³³⁷ Combatants were full-time mobile fighters with military assignment to a specific battalion, while the militia were active as fighters on an as needed basis and lived as civilians. Moroni Bracamonte and Spencer estimate that FMLN combatant to militia ratios reversed from 3:1 early in the war to 1:3 in the late 1980s.

³³⁸ Civil defense patrollers claiming compensation for wartime duty after the war included a total of 38,000 ex-members.

2. Explanations for Rebellion, Resistance or Neutrality

Explaining why insurgency occurred and failed militarily takes one a long way toward explaining the emergence and orientation of local development institutions in the post-war period. The question is why individuals and sometimes entire communities joined the insurgent FMLN, fought against them, or struggled to maintain neutrality to avoid any involvement in the conflict. Few arguments have persuasively explained what Lichbach refers to as “the rebel’s dilemma,” why peasants join revolutions in different settings, which succeed or fail, for wide variety reasons.³³⁹ The most persuasive accounts of 20th century revolutions are syncretic, combining structural factors with culture and rationalist arguments.³⁴⁰ So too, I will argue, for explaining choices of rebellion, resistance or neutrality in the paracentral region of the Salvadoran case, and in turn, post-war agrarian politics and local institutions.

First, it is worth emphasizing how few Salvadorans actually took up arms. Of a total adult population of about two million during the 1980s, no more than 50,000 participated in armed operations with the FMLN (2.5%). Perhaps another 100,000 served as active collaborators in complementary roles. Combined, the total rebel population is just above Lichbach’s 5% rule (1995: 17), and compares with other peasant rebellions.³⁴¹ Generally low numbers of recruits are one dimension of the collective action problem and the solutions that FMLN came up with to resolve it, involving accommodation of different levels of activism. At the same time, the total number of combatants was adequate to carry out impressive tactical victories and achieve a military stalemate with an adversary that was many times larger.

If we assume 250,000 people actively participated in government security forces over 10 years, and another 150,000 for the FMLN, combined active participation represents 20% of the adult population. Four out of every five people, while affected by the war, chose not to actively take a side.

³³⁹ For reviews of peasant insurgency literature, see Skocpol (1982) and Cumings (1981).

³⁴⁰ I refer here to Wickham-Crowley (1993), Goldstone (1993) and Goodwin (1994), and of the earlier generation, Wolf (1969).

³⁴¹ Algerian rebels began with 500 in 1954 (Greene, 1990; Lichbach, 1996: 353).

Second, the act of rebellion must be broken down into specific action categories. Among non-combatants, insurgents distinguished between passive (reluctant or resistant) and active (voluntary) collaborators. War taxes were collected from landed elites, local mayors and agricultural cooperatives by the FMLN and the military/security forces that left little choice but to accept except passive collaboration. Food and information was requisitioned from unsympathetic but fearfully compliant peasant families – also considered passive collaborators who valued access to their home, property or family over personal security. Many also actively collaborated with the FMLN, participating in a wide variety of tasks that were authorized by regional FMLN commanders. Some of these adherents to the revolution were beneficiaries in post-war land transfer and reconstruction programs as recognized FMLN support populations – however the true size of hardcore civilian support of the FMLN was between 500,000 and 1,000,000.³⁴²

The FMLN also typically filtered recruitment through strategic stages of performance to ensure the commitment and quality of the fighting force. There were periods during intense repression and attempted insurrections when recruits were plentiful as well as periods of low morale when conscription was attempted to replenish the ranks. In both cases, necessity obligated the FMLN to relax its recruitment criteria, often having disastrous results. For most, the stages of recruitment began with participation in mass organizations, active collaboration, militia, combatant, combatant with increasing geographic responsibility, then possibly to special forces.³⁴³ Particularly in the early years, new recruits were given significant political training in centers located in the northern rearguard and a political officer was assigned to each brigade to maintain discipline. The political training was responsible for a perceived *mística* of moral discipline for which many FMLN combatants were renowned. Soldiers taken prisoner were released. Torture, theft or abuses of civilians were uncommon.

³⁴² Based on estimates of the civilian population living in conflictive zones controlled by the FMLN, which increased from an early estimate of 500, 000 in 1983 (see *ECA* 1983, Vol. 986-996), divided between 100,000 in Morazán and San Miguel, plus 400,000 in Chalatenango, Usulután, San Vicente, La Unión, Cabanas, Cuscatlan and San Salvador.

³⁴³ Interview, Pablo Parada Andino, FMLN Departmental Commander, Paracentral Zone, April 1998. The combatant rank ascended from militia to guerilla column to zone units to sub-zone units to zone vanguard units to national vanguard unit, and ultimately to the highest rank of special forces.

However the actions of the FMLN, some cited in the U.N. Truth Commission, revealed an uglier side of the rebellion that also took its toll, particularly on the commitment and trust among the younger generation of combatants and passive collaborators. Conscription was attempted for a short period, unsuccessfully. Children participated as active combatants on a fairly wide scale. Some weapons, such as landmines and other homemade artillery used later in the war, were excessively indiscriminate. Civilians, particularly informants and government officials, were executed or kidnapped, obviously without due process. While most of these acts were of limited scope, the FMLN was not immune to the excesses of violence. In one particularly tragic example that occurred in San Vicente between 1986 and 1990, a zone commander ordered the execution of at least 300 FMLN combatants on the suspicion that they were enemy spies or had betrayed the revolution in some way. In some instances these executions involved torture. Suspicions leading to an execution usually began with claims that the person had violated an almost perversely exaggerated discipline required by this commander of both combatant and civilian supporters.

This account of FMLN violence represents a view that is not consistent with the polemic narratives of insurgency that were conveyed at times by published interviews with guerrilla commanders or solidarity organizations (Cienfuegos 1993; Henriquez 1991, 1994; Harnecker 1993). The account offered here is neither a validation of the exaggerated propaganda that intended to misinform about the nature of armed struggle in El Salvador, which ranged from the psychological-operations planting of false attributions of gross acts of violence to the FMLN to more recent post hoc efforts to place equal blame on both the military and the insurgents.³⁴⁴ Rather, this description of peasant rebellion in one conflictive zone of El Salvador acknowledges a tremendous disparity with regard to human rights violations that is laid bare in the Truth Commission Report, but emphasizes how the controversial and destructive excesses by the FMLN have undermined the goals they espoused.

³⁴⁴ This tradition of equating left and right extremism in North American writing may be dated back to Schlesinger (1949), but occupied much of political science analysis of political change in the 1960s. The 1981 Reagan Government White Paper may be the classic example of this type of scholarship. See Agee and Poelchau (1982) for a deconstruction of the various claims about the FMLN. Compare U.S. Ambassador Dean Hinton's statements on the Mozote massacre in 1980. "I certainly cannot confirm such reports, nor do I have any reason to believe they are true," to former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas Enders (1993) effort to wash the slate in a post-war editorial for the full continuum of counter-insurgent discourse.

On the government side, the military forcibly conscripted men for two year terms of service, with the benefits of a monthly stipend of about \$100 and pension benefits in the case of death. Over the course of the war, in large part due to U.S. assistance and training, the size and capacity of the Salvadoran military improved significantly. Beginning in 1982, the military introduced specially trained and equipped rapid response battalions that were the product of U.S. counter-insurgent strategy and could be deployed quickly to any part of the country. The National and Treasury Police also fulfilled roles as security forces in the counter-insurgency system, but were mostly devoted to intelligence duties and vigilance of fixed targets. In addition, civil defense units were established in many rural villages, headed by a *cantón* commander and usually with the accompaniment of the National Guard or military units. This system operated under the command of a Salvadoran circle of officers, but was heavily dependent on U.S. funding and technical guidance.

a. Contours of the Salvadoran civil war

The narrative of the Salvadoran civil war is now well known has been the subject of many analyses, which this effort does not seek to duplicate. As with many prior insurgencies, the FMLN, despite geographic and military disadvantages, surprised most by steadily expanding territory under its control over the twelve year period, reaching military parity with a government force ten times its size, and occupying as much as third of the country when the truce was signed in 1992. The insurgents did so by winning support of a large minority of the population, although attempts to ignite popular insurrections on several occasions, in the early and later years of the war, failed. The Salvadoran military never lost the cushion of popular support or were threatened by the indifference of a significant segment of the population nor the life preserver of the U.S. Treasury (which ensured the unity of the military command), and permitted their survival against an escalation of increasingly spectacular and effective attacks by the FMLN, particularly during the early years of the war. The FMLN also counted on considerable fundraising, through local kidnapping and extortion enterprises, local and international solidarity, military conquest of government supplies, and through savvy diplomacy with sympathetic or allied governments in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Capitalizing on the gains of the agrarian reform and political tolerance among the military high command, the Christian Democrats achieved a majority in the 1982 elections for a constituent assembly, and Duarte defeated hard-right ideologue Major Roberto d'Aubuisson for the presidency in 1985.³⁴⁵ In the 1985 elections, the PDC swept most municipal seats.³⁴⁶ Christian Democrat votes came from rural beneficiaries of state sponsored agricultural support and land reform programs, middle class professionals, in the generalized hope for a negotiated solution to the war.

A rapid expansion of the Salvadoran air force combined with the demonstration effect of elections cast a façade of inevitability upon the uneven transition toward civilian rule under Duarte. These were sufficient to neutralize an FMLN surge in 1983. A scorched earth campaign and massive bombing forced the FMLN to end its initial policy (particularly in FPL zones of control) of defending the civilian population within conflict zones, as thousands of displaced persons fled to internal and external refugee camps.

Both sides shifted to alternative strategies to break the stalemate. An internal move to formally unify the five rebel armies under a joint command was combined with the deconcentration of its battalion size forces into smaller, more mobile units to avoid aerial bombardment and expand the theater of conflict. This included a build up of urban cadre in San Salvador. The return to guerrilla tactics forced the FMLN to rely again on political engagement with expansion zone populations whose political sentiments were not well known and that were not yet active collaborators (Miles and Ostertag 1991). Force levels dropped during this adjustment period as recruitment, at times though attempted conscription, became difficult. Expansion zones of FMLN engagement attempted to replenish declining force levels after losses in the early years of the war and desertions due to discontent with the prospect of a longer war and the more challenging guerrilla tactics.

The government continued to expand the size and capacity of its armed forces through conscription and generous U.S. aid (reaching \$360 million per year in 1987). This made El

³⁴⁵ The U.S. reportedly paid \$6-\$8 million to stage the 1982 elections and \$10.4 million for the 1984 election, intervening extra-judicially in both cases to stave off an ARENA victory. Schwarz (1991: 72-73). See also Brodhead (1984) and Karl (1986).

³⁴⁶ Some have referred to the 1985 elections as the first competitive local vote ever, although political competition in the elections was obviously circumscribed by the absence of any left parties.

Salvador the third highest recipient of U.S. aid after Israel and Egypt. Civilian pacification programs were also redoubled with increasing reliance on mayors as the key interlocutors for administration of local patronage and intelligence gathering. In response, the FMLN pressured and sometimes killed uncooperative mayors to abandon their posts and seized upon the human rights discourse of the elected Duarte government by repopulating conflict zones and demanding recognition as civilians, although many actively collaborated with the FMLN. Popular protests by left organizations returned during this period as well as the electoral ascent of the right wing ARENA party.

Facing the political deterioration of conditions in Nicaragua, signs of the crisis in the Communist bloc countries and U.S. speculation that the FMLN was in decline, the rebels prepared a strategic counter-offensive that occurred in November 1989. While it failed to spark a popular insurrection, the impact of the 11 day offensive was a decisive turning point in the conflict. Coinciding with the killing of Jesuit priests and followed by the FMLN deployment of surface to air missiles to counter government air superiority, the FMLN offensive underscored the perception that the war was unwinnable militarily. At the same time, the status quo was no longer tolerable to the business sector.³⁴⁷ Negotiations began in earnest, and both sides prepared for peace. The FMLN occupied contested land and established the organizational infrastructure to capture solidarity funding flows in the post-war period. The ARENA controlled government reversed the statist reforms of the Duarte period and consolidated its hold on rural municipalities in zones of government control through increased funding to mayors.

In the sections that follow, the intent is to analyze the impact of the war at the local level with only intermittent attention to national or international dynamics. The focus here will again be on how elements of the political opportunity structure (agrarian structure, shifts in elite access and state repression) influenced insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies and gave rise to new local institutions. Did the war leave the country in a complete state of moral and economic ruin, destroying the individual work ethic on which the country

³⁴⁷ Estimates of economic damage caused by the FMLN totaled nearly \$600 million in the 1980s, as well as \$1.5 billion due to lost production from a dramatic decline in investment (U.S. Embassy in San Salvador). Some \$6 billion in U.S. aid over the course of the war helped compensate for these losses. The UNDP (2003: 263) estimates the opportunity cost of the war at a loss of per capita income of \$1,000 due to the four worst years of economic crisis during the 1980s.

rested before the war, as the private sector argued? Had the insurgency triumphed as the rebels claimed by transforming a moribund and repressive regime and its stagnant monopoly over the means of production? Exploring these competing assessments of the war's impact will be the basis for constructing an argument about the empowering or disempowering effect of the Salvadoran civil war and the specific institutional outcomes that reflected these shifts in the post-war period.

b. Tracing the paths of insurgency and counter-insurgency

Within the paracentral zone and the San Vicente case study municipalities in particular, areas of FMLN control were located immediately around the southern half of the *Chinchontepec* volcano (see Figure 5.1). Other rebel held territory included both sides of the lower Lempa River basin stretching from the foothills to the delta, and to the north of San Vicente in an area referred to as *Cerros de San Pedro*. Expansion zones included the eastern half of La Paz, most of Cabañas, the rest of San Vicente and various parts of Usulután. Other strongholds for the FMLN were in Northern Chalatenango and Morazán, the Guazapa region, Cinquera, as well as significant numbers of urban forces in San Salvador. Deep FMLN support in the Western half of El Salvador never endured beyond the first years of the war due to a combination of factors, the most important of which may have been infiltration by government spies (Gibb 2000). Also in the far eastern department of La Unión, particularly to the south, support for the FMLN was weak.

Any explanation of revolution in El Salvador must focus squarely on the impact of agrarian inequality. An entire genre of inequality - violence studies were influenced by Russett's (1964) classic study that found the Gini index of land distribution was associated with civil violence. Using nationally aggregated data, Muller and Seligson (1987) demonstrated that agrarian inequality, using national aggregate data, is a major cause of income inequality. Consequently, for countries in which agriculture remains a major component of their economy, as is the case of El Salvador, inequality of land, inequality of income and political violence are inextricably linked.

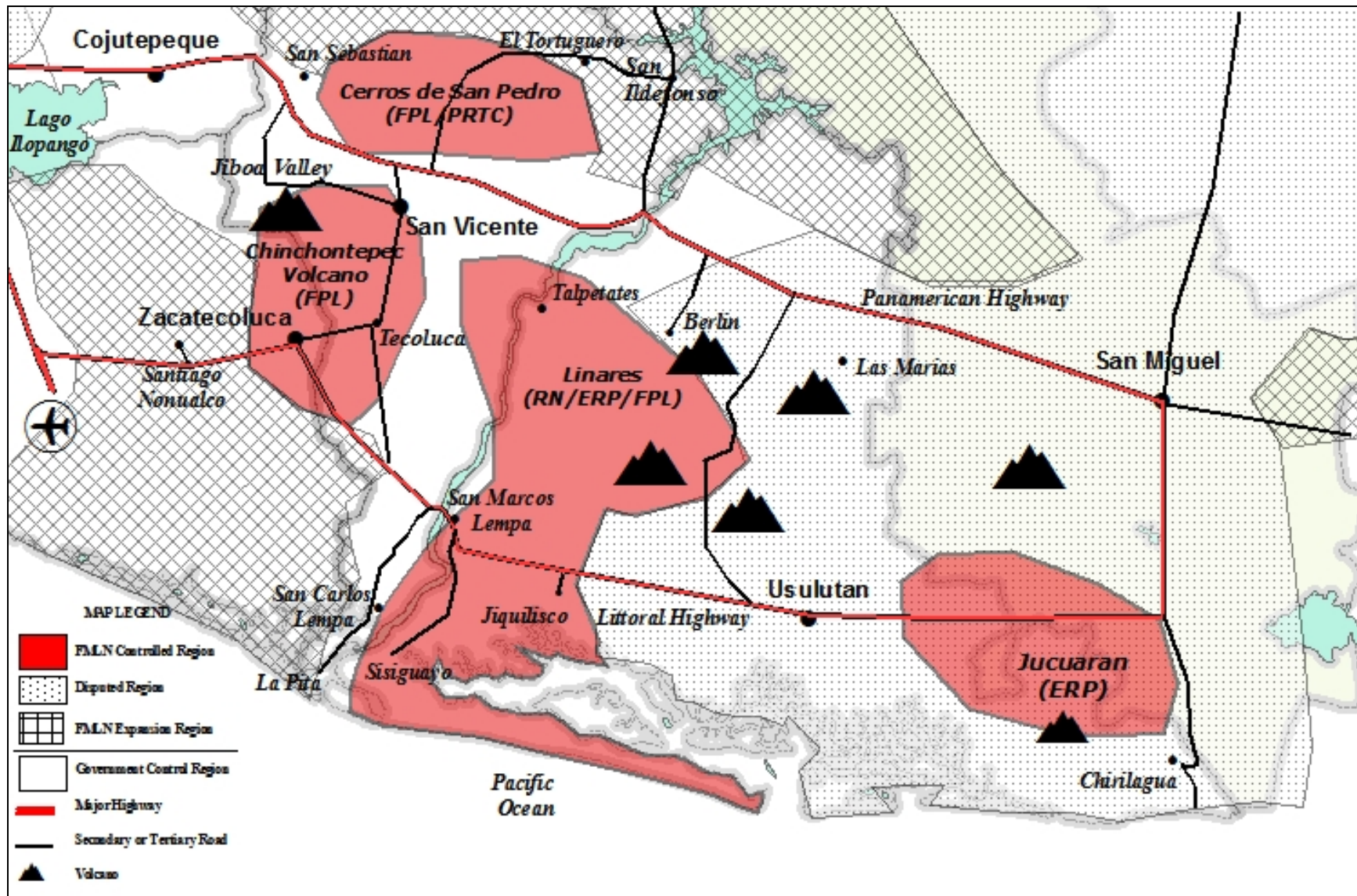


Figure 5.1 FMLN Control and Expansion Zones in late 1980s

Midlarsky (1988, 1999) argues that agrarian violence is explained by the expected patterns of land inheritance and subdivision that assures a different distribution of land among rich and poor families. Primogeniture – the practice of transferring inheritance to the first born son, and lower birth rates among rich families maintain the average size of landholding among the rich relatively steady, while higher birth rates, fewer off-farm opportunities, and subdivision of holdings among all children tend to diminish the size of land parcels among poor families. As a consequence, Midlarsky argues, the upper and lower distribution of landholdings among the rich and poor, respectively, change at different rates. This differentiated pattern of extreme inequality leads to a loss of identification between ruler and ruled, and in turn to political violence. Nevertheless, analysts have long struggled to establish a clear and consistent association between structural inequality and political violence.

The inequality – violence nexus has been well researched by others for the case of El Salvador and indicates no simple explanations. Durham, for example, has shown that inequality in the distribution of land overshadowed population growth as the cause of land scarcity, ultimately factoring heavily in the explanation of the 1969 war with Honduras and the ensuing civil war. However, the highest land inequality in 1971, measured by the Gini coefficient, was in the western third of El Salvador - precisely where agrarian based rebellion failed to take hold.³⁴⁸ Land inequality was so severe throughout the country that it likely represents an essential but not sufficient condition for rebellion.

Attempts to strengthen the theoretical link between inequality and revolution have turned to analyses of the types of peasants and landlords. Yet, here too there is little agreement. For Scott (1976) and Wolf (1969), smallholding or “middle” peasants are most likely to use violence in defense of village moral economy. For Prosterman (1982) and Huntington (1968) landlessness leads to violence, and for Paige (1975) the intermediate categories of sharecropping and migratory labor are the most rebellious – especially when combined with a landed elite possessing few economic alternatives.³⁴⁹ Does access to land expand political

³⁴⁸ A summary of departmental gini coefficients for different years are provided in Table D.5 in Appendix.

³⁴⁹ Despite the persistent appeal of these temptingly elegant geographic or occupational based theories of peasant rebellion, as illustrated in the 1996 exchange between Seligson, Paige and Diskin, they prove surprisingly weak as encompassing explanations for events that we have since learned much more about. While the FMLN deployed its forces, particularly the most mobile units of the Special Forces, it's likely from other accounts that the majority of combatants from the principal conflictive zones were originally from that area. For a similar application to the French Revolution, see Markoff (1996: 337-427).

options or inject a conservative risk aversion? Does landlessness intensify grievances and lower the consequential costs to high risk actions or deepen the dependence on the powerful?

Based on a loose assumption of the geographic origins of peasant revolutionaries, Wickham-Crowley has shown that for El Salvador, the areas of highest support for the FMLN did not have the most severe landlessness (1993: 244). Wickham-Crowley's observation is based on the untested assumption that Morazán and Chalatenango provided the highest per capita number of insurgents. However, these rearguard provinces became the refuge of thousands of displaced combatants from other departments. In sum, there is no evidence to prove which province had the highest level of FMLN recruits.

Explicit tenure based arguments would therefore tend to support the moral economy explanation. Based on 1961 Agrarian Census data, he finds that in the departments of Morazán, Chalatenango, San Vicente, Cabañas, Usulután and La Unión - all areas of FMLN support, had the highest rate of farmers to landless workers. This suggests that the subsistence farmers threatened with loss of land would become the most radicalized. However, the evidence is far from incontrovertible.³⁵⁰ Confounding evidence easily demonstrates the incompleteness of the strict versions of land inequality or land tenure based explanations.

The higher revolutionary participation rates of smallholders in northern regions of El Salvador, and the quiescence of wage workers in the coffee dominated West illustrate an unlikely pattern of landholding and rebellion according to explanations based on Paige's emphasis on rural proletarianization. The memory of the 1932 massacre in this same Western region, may also explain its acquiescence. However, the opposite argument of revolutionary continuity seems relevant to the FPL militants consciously following in the footsteps of Anastasio Aquino. Journalist Tom Gibb presents a far more compelling analysis of the inability of the FMLN to penetrate the western provinces. He describes how as many as 200 FMLN cadre were betrayed and annihilated in ambushes staged by state security forces. The insurgent network was almost completely destroyed by a high level government infiltrator by

³⁵⁰ While Sonsonate and La Libertad, with the highest proportion of landless workers, were less active politically, there are other cases that do not fit either expected pattern (Cuscatlán – high landless, high revolutionary activity; Ahuachapán – low landlessness, low revolutionary activity). While the FMLN deployed its forces, particularly the most mobile units of the special forces, it's likely from other accounts that the majority of combatants from the principal conflictive zones were originally from that area.

1982 (Gibb 2000: 105). Gibb's argument raises further questions about any simple link between landlessness or agrarian structure and revolution.

Paige's emphasis on rural proletarianization in El Salvador relies heavily on Cabarrús' 1983 seminal study of peasant radicalism and indifference in the Aguilares region of northern San Salvador during the 1970s (Paige's Table 2, 1996: 135, based on Cabarrús original Table 42, 1983: 173). Cabarrús' observations of some 812 peasant households, which he then subdivides between wage laborers (40%), poor landowners, renters or sharecroppers that also work as seasonal or daily wage laborers, what Cabarrús calls *semi-proletarians* (30%), and those smallholding farmers that do not have to seek wage labor, or *middle peasants* (24.2%). This distribution is the basis for some speculation about the roots of the conflict. Cabarrús associated peasant household type with political tendency, comparing involvement with FECCAS or two other left leaning popular organizations (ATACES, UNO), the paramilitary rightwing ORDEN, or not being active in either (apolitical). Table 5.2 presents a slight reformulation of Cabarrús original data, as estimated by Paige.

Cabarrús data shows that the semi-proletariat workforce (subsistence landowners, renters and sharecroppers), which has insufficient land to meet their family's needs and must also earn income as a seasonal or day laborer (*jornalero*), is the most politically active. This category of peasant, what Paige calls a "pobretariado," is most likely to experience a visible link between the experience of extreme poverty and the actions of the landowning class. Thus, the semi-proletarian is most likely to associate with the radical FECCAS (39.9%) than the counter-insurgent ORDEN (26.5%). Wage laborers and middle peasants are almost two times as likely to be apolitical than to join either a revolutionary or counter-revolutionary peasant movement.³⁵¹ All three types of peasant appear equally likely to join ORDEN.

³⁵¹ Carlos Rafael Cabarrús (1983: 167-280, specifically Tables 42 and 43, pgs. 183-184) and Paige's reformulation of Cabarrús data to correct for the error in presenting organizational percentages rather than peasant type percentages, although the same generally pattern holds.

Table 5.2 Support for Opposition and Army Peasant Organizations, 1974-1977, by Type of Peasant, reformulation of Cabarrús data

Type of Peasant	Opposition FECCAS (Column %)	Army ORDEN (Column %)	Apolitical (Column %)	Peasant Type Totals
Middle Peasant	56 (23.0%)	48 (26%)	93 (21.7%)	197 (24.2%)
Semi-Proletarian	107 (43.9%)	71 (38.4%)	112 (29.2%)	290 (35.7%)
Wage-Laborer	81 (33.2%)	66 (35.7%)	178 (54.8%)	325 (40.0%)
Organizational Affiliation Totals	244 (100%)	185 (100%)	383 (100%)	812 (100%)

Source: Paige (1996, Table 2, pg. 135), row, column maximums are in bold

Using my own survey data, a rough assessment of the peasant type argument can be made for the paracentral region.³⁵² In the 1998 survey, 912 respondents were asked about life before the war (including parent's socio-economic profile and access to land) and about participation in the FMLN, Armed Forces, or the militias of either band during the war. The sample of 214 ex-combatants and ex-militia (23.5% of all respondents, 205 of which provided valid responses to questions about parent's access to land) provides some useful insight into explaining the respective revolutionary or counter-revolutionary involvement and reveals the high level of participation in the paracentral region.³⁵³ This information differs from Cabarrús in that I am not comparing pre-war peasant organizational involvement, but rather reported war-time participation in political-military organizations.

First, I try to replicate Cabarrús analysis of the pre-war agrarian structure. Table 5.3 compares access to land among peasant households before the war with war-time participation.

³⁵² See Appendix B description of survey sample and question wording.

³⁵³ The higher number of FMLN combatants and base members compared to military and civil defense is clearly not aligned with the proportion of total participants reflected in Table 5.1. These sample results are due in part to the greater willingness to discuss past political experiences within insurgent communities, the greater percentage of women that participated in the insurgency (in part an artifact of quotas for overall gender sampling in the sample), and the higher probability that demobilized armed forces were not in rural areas.

My typology of war participation includes both FMLN and Armed Forces veteran combatants, but distinguishes two intermediate categories of combatant. Civil defense includes all respondents that reported serving in the civil *patrullas cantónales* or ORDEN. FMLN base includes all that reported benefiting from the PTT or participating in insurgent mass organizations or militia. A family farm category is added to the original typology to distinguish between smallholders with greater or less than 5 manzanas (3.5 ha.) – considered a minimal amount of land necessary for a sustainable rural livelihood.³⁵⁴ The results provide evidence supporting different peasant theories of rebellion.³⁵⁵

Over three quarters of the landless wage laborers are involved at similarly high rates in both insurgent categories. One in three armed forces respondents were also from landless families. The semi-proletariat that Paige and Cabarrús feature as the prototype peasant insurgent tends to be more represented in all but the government soldier category, but there is no clear discernable ideological link between these other three participant categories. Among the middle and medium peasants, the evidence for Scott's moral economy argument is mixed as well. We do see an even level of participation in the government civil defense as in the FMLN base and combatant categories. However, among the few pre-war medium peasant households in the sample, the pattern is somewhat opposite to that expected with the highest rates of participation as FMLN combatants or militia.

The column percentages may be more reliable for the higher numbers of FMLN participation, but the distribution also suggests that landlessness and subsistence and middle-medium peasants are equally present in the two combatant groups (FMLN and armed forces). Landlessness is a stronger predictor of FMLN base support, while access to land is a stronger predictor of civil defense. In short, the data from the survey suggest that landlessness and land poverty may have swelled the ranks of belligerent forces. However, these attributes of agrarian structure provide no clear indication of which side they would join.

³⁵⁴ The average land reform property is 3.5 hectares, however the actual farm size varies with land quality. For Cabarrús, the cut off was between 3 and 5 manzanas.

³⁵⁵ The chi-square statistic for this comparison is 17.4 ($p < .135$). The probability that the differences between these categories reflect the true population differences is below the typically accepted threshold ($p < .05$), but drops to ($p < .06$) when the middle peasant and family farm categories are combined.

Several examples illustrate common anomalies to such a narrow focus on peasant agrarian structure to explain rebellion. Several of the more notable figures in the FPL came from landowning families. As noted in the previous chapter, the family of Nicolás García from *León de Piedra* were smallholders whose rationale for joining the FPL were largely unassociated with their own landholding status. The family David and Benigno Rodríguez owned 7 hectares of land, produced sugar cane and operated a *trapiche* employing twenty laborers. Rodríguez described his family as “*ricos medios*” (middle rich) with enough land to employ

Table 5.3 Agrarian Structure and Peasant Insurgent Participation, El Salvador’s Paracentral Region

Parents' Access to Land Before the War	Reported Participation in the War				Total
	Insurgent		Counter-insurgent		
	FMLN Row (%) Column (%)	FMLN base	Civil Defense	Armed Forces	
Family Farm (>=5 mz)	5 (41.7%) (7.6%)	4 (33.3%) (6.3%)	2 (16.7%) (4.8%)	1 (8.3%) (3.0%)	12 (100.0%) (5.9%)
Middle Peasant (1-5 mz)	16 (27.1%) (24.2%)	13 (23.3%) (20.3%)	16 (28.6%) (38.1%)	10 (17.9%) (30.3%)	56 (100.0%) (27.3%)
Subsistence Semi-Proletariat (<= 1 mz)	17 (30.4%) (25.8%)	19 (32.2%) (29.7%)	17 (28.8%) (40.5%)	7 (11.9%) (21.2%)	59 (100.0%) (28.8%)
Landless Wage Laborer	24 (36.4%) (36.4%)	26 (39.4%) (40.6%)	5 (7.6%) (11.9%)	11 (16.7%) (33.3%)	66 (100.0%) (32.2%)
NS/NR	4 (33.3%) (6.1%)	2 (16.7%) (3.1%)	2 (16.7%) (4.8%)	4 (33.3%) (12.1%)	12 (100.0%) (5.9%)
Total	67 (32.2%) (100.0%)	64 (16.1%) (100.0%)	42 (20.5%) (100.0%)	33 (16.1%) (100.0%)	205 (100.0%) (100.0%)
Source: 1998 Paracentral Survey (Peasant Households only)					

non-family labor and foot the higher education bill for three children. The attitudes that he cites as instrumental to his eventual choice to join the FMLN had to do with the observed violation of norms of fairness and honesty in the treatment of local laborers that contradicted his own family's paternalist relations with their workforce. Rather than an inflexible, calculated conservatism that was reinforced by his theological training, Rodríguez responded to the provocations of agrarian injustice he found in Tecoluca as a parish priest in ways that some theories of agrarian rebellion can not explain.

The family of Pablo Parada Andino, the departmental commander of the FPL in the paracentral region also owned over 7 hectares to the north of Santa Cruz Porillo, Tecoluca – which suffered some of the worst violence anywhere in the country. Against the advice of his father and offers of assistance to help him leave the country, he chose to incorporate in the FPL in mid 1970s. The father of Norberto Contreras was a landowner in Zacatecoluca and *mandador* on a large farm. Despite “always having food on the table, a house and land to work,” Norberto joined the BPR as a labor organizer in the coffee and cotton encampments and then the FPL. Margarito Cañas Romero, now a community leader in Santa Monica, Tecoluca, was originally from Ciudad Barrios, located in a conservative coffee belt in northern San Miguel. His family owned 10 hectares of coffee and economic conditions were improving for them in the late 1970s. His motivations to join the FPL stemmed from the commitments to the poor that evolved during his training as a catechist at *El Castaño*, but also to the wave of repression by the National Guard in his community in 1979, from which he barely escaped. Not entirely prepared or comfortable with being a combatant, he worked as a political trainer for the militia and eventually requested transfer to be live with his family in a marginal community in San Salvador in 1985 until he led the repatriation of his current community in 1991.³⁵⁶

In all of these cases, a combatant's family landowning or agrarian occupational status provides only clues to the eventual decisions to incorporate into the FMLN, rather than complete explanations. Repression, community ties, religious training all condition the influence of agrarian structure. Geographical linkages between agrarian inequality and insurgent participation are also complicated by the interplay between economic motivations

³⁵⁶ Interview, Norberto Contreras (“Ramoncito”), San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, April 3, 1998; and Margarito Cañas, La Florida, Tecoluca; David Rodríguez, and Pablo Anaya.

and political opportunity. Some combatants experienced the war far from where they were born because as Skocpol (1979) has argued, structural conditions (rugged defensible terrain, permissiveness of political institutions, the fluctuation of prices and wages, and the defection of marginal political elites) also determined the location (and timing) of rebellion. Thousands of potential combatants flooded out of their communities and into the ranks of the five insurgent organizations in 1980-1981, which were incapable of absorbing them all. Consequently, the severe challenges of survival during the first years saw many potential revolutionaries quickly abandoned the struggle.³⁵⁷

Again, what motivated a person to consider joining the FMLN was not necessarily the same set of factors that made them decide to stay. Confronting this methodological challenge takes us farther from pre-war agrarian structure. However, the link between participation and agrarian structure is never entirely severed because the FMLN and the Armed Forces both relied on a relatively stable, fixed support base to supply and protect its food and information needs. Producers that engaged in passive or active collaboration with FMLN combatants, which I lump into the category FMLN base, suggest that agrarian relations may offer more leverage in explaining their motivations than those of the full-time combatants.³⁵⁸

It's well known that many urban revolutionaries were forced to the countryside after 1981. Conversely, some sharecroppers displaced by export crops joined the revolution only after they migrated to the city. During the war, some combatants fought far from their home communities. However, insurgent mobilization strategies that concentrated forces for large attacks now faced certain limits. One of the determining forces for decentralization within the FMLN was a strong desire among combatants and displaced supporters to return and remain close to their place of origin, which explains the motivations behind the repatriation movement. Deep ties between families also regulated the FMLN mobilization strategy in late 1980s, as recruitment hinged upon deployment strategies that allowed greater flexibility to serve in proximity to one's home communities.

³⁵⁷ Gibb (2000: 96-105 and 232) and interviews with various combatants.

³⁵⁸ Unfortunately, these categories are not so neatly delineated as some combatants and militia transitioned between active fighter status and reserve. A similar cycle likely effected the status of civil defense and conscripted soldiers. In many cases, respondents were both.

A large number of combatants and supporters that were originally from the paracentral region, remained in there for most of the war. The central - coastal theater of the revolution is unlike the other principal theaters of the war, due to the mixed presence of both smallholders and landless laborers. Large landowners of coffee, cotton, cattle and sugar estates existed side by side subsistence and landless grain farmers. In Tecoluca, according to former combatant, mayor and now FMLN Congressional deputy, Nicolás García, the violence was often most intense because the revolutionary peasants were attacking the very foundation of the landed elite's power – not where it was weakest, but where it was strongest.

What existed here was a direct relation between the National Guard, the army and the large landowners. And the landowners, in the very midst of the civil war, had not lost their faith that they would regain their property. From San Miguel to San Vicente, FARO ruled. It was FARO that provoked the violence and ordered the Guard where to go to dislodge and massacre people. Here you had some of the largest landowners that directly financed and organized these death squads. Unlike the smaller properties in Chalatenango and Morazán, in Tecoluca the very richest landowners themselves were being hit directly. (Nicolás García, Tecoluca, April 1999)

Given this highly varied social and economic geography, the events of the war produced relatively bifurcated patterns of insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization in neighboring communities, suggesting the type of peasant may be less important than the effectiveness of the mobilizing vehicle.

Part of the answer is revealed by an expanded view of individual choice. Insurgent, counter-insurgent and neutral choices all stem from either beliefs that the respective cause was just, the calculation of which side would win and the relative value added by one's participation, or the credibility of the threat to punish insurgent resistance or reward counter-insurgent cooperation.

Along these lines, a different view of the inequality –violence nexus is argued by Collier and Hoeffler (1999, 2001) who distinguish *grievance-driven violence* from *greed-driven* (economically motivated criminal) *violence*, to analyze how certain mediating factors act as catalysts or deterrents. *Grievance-driven* theories of violence, in the vein of those structural inequality arguments discussed so far, are rooted in theories of relative deprivation, which assume that people are motivated by a sense of moral indignation caused by comparing one's gains or losses to another's. It might be argued that by the early 1970s, the sense of injustice among the peasant workforce was generalized and widespread and that most if not all

of the rural workforce believed that encompassing structural reforms were justified.³⁵⁹ If so, it tells us little about why some communities allied with the FMLN while others did not.

According to *greed-driven* violence, collective or private participation in acts of violence are not the expression of moral outrage or principled actions, but rather the careful calculation of the costs and benefits of that participation. Collier and Hoeffler argue that the global pattern of large-scale conflict since 1965 suggests that narrow economic agendas rather than political grievances are the driving force behind periods of revolutionary violence (Collier and Hoeffler 1999; Berdal and Malone 2000). Grossman similarly argues that revolutionary success or failure is dependent on the capacity to provide excludable benefits to followers. In effect, “insurgents are indistinguishable from bandits and pirates” (Grossman 1999: 269). “Rebellion,” argues Collier, “is unrelated to objective circumstances of grievance while being caused by the feasibility of predation” (Collier 2000c: 4). According to this view, insurgency and violent crime can be studied as similar enterprises that succeed or fail on the basis of cost-revenue criteria espoused by participating organizations. The availability of primary commodity export revenue for war taxes, kidnapping ransom and more recently, remittance flows, are identified as the key motivating factors behind organized violence.³⁶⁰

The greed-driven violence theory is consistent with the belief, instilled by the government forces and officials, that the FMLN were terrorists that planned to expropriate all private property, outlaw religion, enslave children and turn the elderly into soap, views which were also transmitted in the countryside. Gross manipulation of insurgent demands were (and continue to be) much more useful as threats by the private sector to strike fear in peasant communities to motivate their resistance to the “communist hordes.” Many peasants in expansion and government control zones considered government propaganda carefully in their rationale for not choosing active collaboration with the FMLN.³⁶¹ In other words, the

³⁵⁹ In fact, early demands of wage adjustments and improved treatment of workers were quite modest by comparison to later demands that escalated to land redistribution, the elimination of the repressive state security forces and even laying claim to the right to govern the country.

³⁶⁰ Collier focuses on the funding source as the strand that links insurgent and criminal enterprises. He argues that post-civil war conflict is likely because revenue can be generated through some combination of domestic extortion and donations from diaspora populations. However, it has been much more difficult to demonstrate that exile populations financially underwrite insurgent or revolutionary activities. See also Grossman (1999).

³⁶¹ The most common fears included forced relocation, confiscation of all property and the loss of personal freedoms, particularly for children and the elderly under an FMLN government. These threats have persisted

perception of the relative costs of an FMLN victory was inflated, while the perceptions of the relative gains remained low.

However, as a rationalist explanation of the insurgent motivations, the greed-driven violence theory emphasizes, like Popkin (1979), that all potential peasant collaborators are and remain conservative in their choices, not persuaded by change in consciousness, but rather a comparison of the net payoff deriving from his/her participation. Materialist interests (or maximized utility) not norms of justice, explain strategic choice regarding whether and how to participate. A tipping factor may intensify this choice, if a family or respected community member was already an active member of either side. Social networks worked to raise the stakes of the choice by increasing the assurance of a payoff or sanction.

The Salvadoran conflict provides several ways of exploring this claim. In the early part of the 1970s, the perception among most of the rural poor was that state repression would be selective. Instead, military and paramilitary operations unleashed indiscriminate and massive violence beginning in the years leading up to the war.³⁶² Some have argued that the selective benefits of service to ORDEN were essential for explaining why so many rural peasants opted for counter-insurgent alliance with a state that had degenerated into daily abuses against other peasants. Equally compelling, however, are the testimonies of those who participated in the civil defense forces for their own security – in other words, to elude more dangerous service or sanctions by the local army commanders.

In the *cantón* of San Benito, Guadalupe, a small coffee grower explained that his unsolicited appointment as sergeant of the local civil defense at the outset of the war was

among ARENA militants and have even been refined. In the 2004 Presidential campaigns, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Roger Noriega suggested one week prior to the elections that the U.S. might reconsider its migration policy if the FMLN were to win. The millions of Salvadorans that receive monthly remittance checks have become the target of the new counter-insurgent hearts and minds campaign.

³⁶² Mark Danner's (1994) *The Massacre at El Mozote*, and other grim accounts of the 1980 decimation of over a thousand people, mostly civilians, in Morazán by the Salvadoran Armed Forces, are good examples of arguments based on this perceived peasant rationality. Danner attributes some of the victim's reluctance to abandon the zone in heed of FMLN warnings to the belief that Protestants like themselves would be spared because only these communities associated with progressive Catholics were being persecuted by the military. Leigh Binford's (1996) *The El Mozote Massacre* provides a more thorough analysis of local decision making that suggests that religion had less to do with it than class. Migrants who had left El Mozote to pick coffee survived, while many who stayed and died were the families of small property owners who were reluctant to abandon their homes and stores. A similar religious explanation is allegedly responsible for the refusal of a large group of women and children from Protestant evangelical families to abandon refuge from a 1982 army sweep in a local church in El Campanario, Tecoluca. At least 90 were killed.

perceived as a test of his loyalty to the military after an uncle was tortured and executed by the death squads as a suspected insurgent:

Two sons from my uncle's family were disappeared and it was suspected they had joined the insurgents. Service in the civil defense was obligatory, although there were no weapons to distribute and the elderly men among us were unsuited for effective service. When I complained to Cantón commander about these conditions, I was arrested. Two of my brothers fled to the U.S. to escape death threats, and my father asked me to leave as well. But instead of joining them, I chose to serve for twelve years as a civil defense.³⁶³

Another ex-civil defense patroller from Candelaria Arriba in San Cayetano described his situation:

We did not want to abandon our land and so we had to serve in the civil defense, because if we did not, the military would say we with the guerilla. That was how we passed many years pinned down by both sides in the skirt of the volcano, under the rains and not even able to visit our homes. When the *muchachos* passed by, we hid and they fired only a few shots. I think they had pity on us because they could have finished us off if they had wanted.³⁶⁴

Despite the high risks and low returns, active collaboration with the FMLN was never an option. While motivations varied among the civil defense volunteers, few described their civil patrol service with sentiments of satisfaction of having fulfilled a duty or moral obligation. This pride and joy in the recounted experiences of revolutionary participation, or what Elisabeth Wood refers to as “pleasure in agency” when describing the accounts of insurgent cooperative leaders in Usulután, is not as apparent in the narratives of former members of the civil defense. Rather, in the interviews of ex-patrollers, the overwhelming attitude associated with experiences of counter-insurgent participation coincides with the findings presented in Table 5.4 (below), which tend to emphasize a climate of fear and intimidation by the local military commanders as the primary motivation.³⁶⁵

³⁶³ Interview, Guadalupe, anonymous, July 29, 1998.

³⁶⁴ Survey interview, Candelaria Arriba, San Cayetano, anonymous, Aug. 6, 1998

³⁶⁵ Interviews, Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso, anonymous.

On the other hand, the escalating violence during the early years of the war should have extinguished any rational belief that the FMLN could provide protection from state repression or that selective material benefits from joining the insurgency would be had in the short term. Given the formidable odds that the FMLN faced at the outset, insurgent beliefs that justify participation seem to defy rational justification, and seem at times suicidal. Many of those who joined the FMLN in the early years attested to the impact of the bible circles, the peasant schools, the first encounters with local landowners, land occupations or proximity to the very first guerrilla cells as the evidence not only of the moral propriety of armed struggle, but also that the relative value of one's participation was indeed significant, and therefore a motivating incentive to join.

What were the motivations? When combatants reflected on the factors that behind their decision to join the revolution, invariably religion, landlessness, labor rights, and repression were all part of this script. What about selective benefits? The few meager successes that peasant movements may have won did result in some economic improvement, they were often eclipsed by the violence and general economic upheaval of the years leading to war.

Many remember the slogans a little differently, perhaps due to the rapid inflation during the 1970s that depreciated the value of the prevailing rural wage – even after several increases. The demands called for wage increases of as much as 14 *colones* (\$5.5) per day, better food and treatment on the haciendas for laborers, and increasingly – access to land itself. Combatants explained how religion, labor rights and repression converged to forge leaders and galvanize support among the rural population:

The UTC formed a negotiating commission that would organize lighting visits to the cotton labor camps, arriving and leaving so quickly the people did not see how we did it. “What do you want *compañeros*? we would ask. ‘We want rice, tortillas and beans!’ ... and what about salary...’fourteen colones,’ they responded. And that’s how it started, and well, we were winning those demands, and that’s how we began to organize the people. We called strikes on various haciendas and sometimes had to remove those that crossed to help the landowner. Where did these things come from? For me, they were born from the bible, yes, the things that the bible said and were written and were going to happen. This is where the idea surfaced that we the poor did not have to be exploited by the rich. I remember that, that the bible says it. Some priests also explained this to us through the mass, ...some were killed because they explained the hard life of the poor....I knew Monsignor Romero, he also died explaining the truth.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁶ Interview, Venicia Velásquez, originally Colono in Marquezado, San Vicente, former FPL combatant, now living in La Sabana, Tecoluca, April 4, 1998.

Another combatant described how the escalation of tactics depended upon the willingness of the landowner to negotiate concessions to an increasingly organized peasantry:

In 1978, political leaders of the BPR called a strike on the coffee finca of Margarita Cristiani (La Florida) demanded a 100% increase in day wages (2.5 colones), better food and sleeping conditions during the harvest. We formed a negotiating commission that delivered a letter to the farm manager stating the worker's demands and threatening to strike or even burn the finca's assets if the demands were not met. These were some of the first alternatives that were placed as pressure on the negotiation. Everyone concentrated in the encampment supported the platform and about 250-300 workers joined the strike and occupied the finca. After the third day, the National Guard was called in and removed us, and threatened to kill us if the strike continued. They dislodged us but at the same time, in order to avoid the other threat, the *patron* decided it would be better to comply in part by paying a higher salary, although he refused the other conditions. Although this was the peak of labor organizing, we knew we could not win everything and gaining something to build upon was important.³⁶⁷

Another ex-militia from Usulután recounts the increasing confidence that culminated in the first land occupations (1976-77):

I participated in the very first land occupations, Angela Montano, Corral de Piedra, Platanares. They were beautiful moments. We sang songs, read compositions, poetry, people organized political study sessions, others came from Cabañas, Cuscatlan, San Salvador bringing food to support us. Some owners were friendly and didn't give the order for the Guard to kill anyone. It helped that we had 500 people armed with home-made weapons. When the Guard arrived and tried to remove us, we surrounded them with sticks and stones. On three attempts, we didn't permit it. In Platanares, people were killed when the owner, Nicolás Viuda de Torres and the National Guard forced us off the land. When we demanded support from the Bishop, he asked us, "whose land was it and why did we take it?" We responded, 'we took it because she would not share the land with the poor.'³⁶⁸

Fear and intimidation were not absent as factors in the motivations in FMLN recruitment, one former combatant explains how he was recruited:

My father took me to work with him on cotton hacienda, El Zamorrano, in the Lower Lempa valley region [Jiquilisco]. I worked hard, as hard as anyone, but one day the caporal denied me a day's wage claiming I had not completed my share of work. I challenged the caporal to give me two tasks the following day and promised to complete them to vindicate myself and recover the lost wage. The next

³⁶⁷ Interview, Norberto Contreras, ex-FPL combatant, San Carlos Lempa, April 3, 1998

³⁶⁸ Interview, Irene, former militia from San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, April 19, 1998,

day, a second caporal approached me to talk. He asked me why I had challenged the foreman and I explained my anger. The second caporal calmed me down. It turned out that the second caporal was a catechist that had infiltrated the hacienda to recruit us for additional training at El Castaño. Over the next few weeks, he helped me channel my anger into a more revolutionary direction. I learned to be a community leader in this moment that began with this encounter. When Monsignor Romero was still here, everything was better, but it couldn't last. My father was wanted by the National Guard because his son was suspected of being a guerrilla. This was true for many families. After some time, I was recruited to join the FPL. I did join and participated in the first recovery of G-3 rifles from the National Guard in our entire region.³⁶⁹

To fill in the picture, I turn now to another part of the survey data. Ex-combatants were asked to explain their personal motivations for joining their respective organizations. The answers were then coded under six categories summarized in Table 5.4. Four column categories distinguish modes of insurgent and counter-insurgent participation. FMLN and FAES indicate respondents that reported being formally demobilized as ex-combatants. FMLN base includes respondents that were Land Transfer beneficiaries or self-ascribed militia. Civil defense also refers to self-reported participation in support of the Armed Forces.

Several points are worth noting. First, the motivating factors of principled voluntarism and repression are more heavily represented in the choices of insurgents. Conversely, the issues of conscription and economic benefits weigh more heavily in the choices of government soldiers. Fewer than 20% of the civil defense veterans interviewed reported voluntary participation and none indicated economic benefits, while nearly two thirds reported conscription. Family ties, meaning the probability that one's decision was heavily influenced by the prior participation or death of a family member, is also important for FMLN militia. Furthermore, it is significant that a large number of the FMLN base (21%), many of whom are beneficiaries of land in the post-war period, did not know or would not state specific motivations for their participation. Thus, within the former FMLN militia there exists a substantial variation in the level of commitment to war-time participation.

What these reported ex-combatant motivations begin to illustrate is a pattern where participation with the FMLN was forced to a disproportionate degree by state repression, but it was more than that. Unlike the estimates that some have proffered where repression was the undisputed motivation behind the effective recruitment of insurgents, FMLN participation

³⁶⁹ Interview, Carlos Urbina, La Florida, Tecoluca, Aug. 25, 1998

reflects a much higher level of free will when compared to government forces. Government forces, on the other hand, were subject to much higher levels of forced recruitment, although the FMLN used this policy sporadically as well. In sum, the survey evidence suggests greater bottom-up motivations among the insurgents compared to top-down carrot and stick methods among the military.

Table 5.4 Reason for Joining Revolutionary or Counter-Revolutionary Organizations
(1998 Paracentral Survey, all households)

	Reasons for Joining							Total
	Repression	Free Will	Free will, principles, plus recruitment or repression	Conscription	Family Ties	Economic Benefits	Don't know or did not respond	
Armed Forces	3	5	6	10	2	6	3	35
Col. %	11.5%	7.5%	17.6%	27.0%	10.5%	66.7%	13.6%	16.4%
Civil Defense	2	8	4	23	2	0	3	42
Col. %	7.7%	11.9%	11.8%	62.2%	10.5%	.0%	13.6%	19.6%
FMLN militia	10	13	15	2	10	2	14	66
Col. %	38.5%	19.4%	44.1%	5.4%	52.6%	22.2%	63.6%	30.8%
FMLN	11	41	9	2	5	1	2	71
Col. %	42.3%	61.2%	26.5%	5.4%	26.3%	11.1%	9.1%	33.2%
Total	26	67	34	37	19	9	22	214
Col. %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Finally, Table 5.5 simply presents a breakdown of participation in the case study communities.³⁷⁰ Here, we see that insurgent presence was quite low in the Jiboa Valley, FMLN forces were predominant in Tecoluca and a balance of government and insurgent experiences are represented in San Ildefonso. This pattern suggests that the conflict experiences in each of the three case study regions were considerably different. I argue that these three contexts where rebellion or resistance took deep root or was contested now represent important factors in and of themselves as explanatory variables for behavior and attitudes in the post-war period.

Effective recruitment, either by force as was the case in the military or through principled voluntarism among many FMLN combatants, confounds any simple moral or rational explanation of peasant behavior. By recruiting similar peasant types, both sides consolidated a solid base of support in the countryside that was decisive in blocking victory by their respective adversary.

As elegant as Paige's two variable explanation for rebellion may be (agrarian producer type and landlord income source), the most instructive studies of rebellion have turned toward exploring multivariate explanations that encompass some of these other factors. Wickham-Crowley's persuasive explanation of rural political violence or peasant revolution strongly suggests that violence in wartime El Salvador can't be explained by agrarian inequality alone. Comparing 26 cases of attempted peasant revolution, he finds two factors are necessary for revolt to become a successful revolution: a rigid, dictatorial regime and solid peasant support. Peasant support combines elements of agrarian structure with cultural and social ties. In the Salvadoran context, these last two variables account for the impact of shifting elite alliances (e.g. liberation theology or conservative Catholic parishes and priests, guerrilla leaders, etc.) and the reactions to state repression.

³⁷⁰ The percentage of FMLN combatants and militia in the sample might be viewed as higher than the national average of 5-10%. This can be explained in part by selection of a conflictive zone for the survey universe. Also, the higher representation of women in both insurgent options, compared to the Armed Forces and Civil Defenses, increases the possible sample for the FMLN. While the sample includes one female soldier and it is known that women did serve in some rural civil defense brigades, the known absolute and reported levels were both low. This resulted in essentially limiting the population of surveyed government combatants to just the male population.

Table 5.5 War-Time Military Participation in Case Study Municipalities

						Total
		Jiboa Valley	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Secondary Municipalities	
Armed Forces		13	5	3	14	35
	Col. %	44.8%	7.9%	8.6%	16.1%	16.4%
Civil Defense		16	2	10	14	42
	Col. %	55.2%	3.2%	28.6%	16.1%	19.6%
FMLN militia		0	19	15	32	66
	Col. %	.0%	30.2%	42.9%	36.8%	30.8%
FMLN		0	37	7	27	71
	Col. %	.0%	58.7%	20.0%	31.0%	33.2%
Total		29	63	35	87	214
	Col. %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Analogous to Wickham-Crowley's emphasis on regime type, Brockett (1991) has argued that the inequality-violence nexus is mediated by a multivariate political opportunity structure of elite allies, institutional openness, and state repressive capacity.¹ Fully open or fully closed political opportunity structures are least likely to facilitate rebellion.²

In the early 1970s, one political opportunity structure existed, comprised by a reformist pause that signaled the weakness in the military regime, intense inequality generating a surplus of discontent and a plethora of dissident political and religious elites. By 1980, this opportunity structure had changed, dramatically narrowing the choices for political participation. The escalation of state repression both eliminated the prospect of pacific political organizing and forced many to choose as a matter of survival in the face of conscription or the difficult decision of taking vengeance against or refuge from the reprisals associated with the killing of family or friends. Midway through the civil war, it had changed again as the military stalemate

³⁷¹ See also Goodwin (1994, 2001)

³⁷² Markoff (1996: Ch7) meticulously compares patterns of revolt in the French Revolution, trying out the fit of many of these theories, but finding few unified explanations for the many kinds of rural insurrection that were observed. Various theories helped explain one or two kinds of insurrection at one or two moments in the revolution but that practically nothing (other than commercial ties to distant markets) helped explain many kinds of insurrection at many moments.

and electoral legitimacy opened space for old and new forms of political engagement to reappear.

In each scenario, a specific configuration of contending elites, both nationally and regionally, prompted strategic innovations by both insurgent and counter-insurgent forces to exploit perceived windows for action and recruit participation in their respective initiatives. One such innovation was land reform by the Christian Democrats as a safety valve to bleed off the pressure of accumulated rural grievances. Another was the combination of indiscriminate repression by the security forces and death squads plus the jacking up the costs of insurgency with civic pacification programs (Goodwin 2001: 162). A third innovation was the civilian-combatant alliance that was deftly employed by the FMLN to lower the costs of insurgent participation by offering a menu of options, to adapt the concept of mass organizations in the context of war, and to inevitably experiment with decentralized self-governance. Each innovation was a reaction to competing efforts to pry open or slam shut the political opportunity structure for rebellion.

Social and family networks were significant in channeling reactions to state repression (and to a lesser degree FMLN violence) into revolutionary or counter-revolutionary participation. One FMLN organizer described how recruitment was selective to exploit the victimization of the early repression:

As a mass organizer, it was critical to show how only through organization we would win. Every community would have their benchmark achievement (*hecho*) that made the struggle real for them. The trauma of the early repression played a role in the FPL recruitment strategy. In the 1970s, I worked as a driver on the Hacienda Obrajuelo, and joined like many out of an idealistic conviction to change the misery I saw around me. At the same time, it became clear early on that the dominant class would use indiscriminate repression to stop us. In Tecoluca, the National Guard commander, Sergeant Chele Ramos, instructed the cantón patrols that those peasants that had strayed from their mother would inevitably become communists and the law compelled that they be identified and killed. Ramos personally executed dozens of suspected guerrillas using a makeshift guillotine within the Tecoluca National Guard garrison. In my own family, ten were killed in a massacre at La Raya in 1982, one of many in Tecoluca that was carried out trying to break the will of the people. Instead, through the construction of a “mother collective” (*madre colectiva*) of ties to families of combatants, the repression only reinforced our recruiting capabilities. In my case, I founded a network linking over 200 extended families of combatants. When one family member fell in combat, these ties allowed us to effectively recruit other family members. Like me, many joined based on ideals and conviction, but these values were clearly forged into something else by vengeance. The struggle became something very personal. (Interview, Omar, San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, April 9, 1998)

The question raised by Stoll is whether this strategy based on the effects of state violence was pre-meditated and amounted to placing peasants on the anvil of state repression as a means for inducing those on the sidelines to join.³⁷³ Recruits who followed in the footsteps of a fallen family member may have joined the revolutionary movement based on agreement with what the FMLN was doing, but the deep desire for military combat was a consequence of the repression. Conviction was forged “by making the struggle personal.” On both sides, family and social ties became important motivating influences over time, within which competing notions of injustice were only triggers to compel service in tribute to a fallen friend or family member.

As the war reached a stalemate and the numbers involved grew, the sense of one’s relative value added declined significantly, reflected in FMLN difficulties replenishing its ranks by the mid-1980s and the continued government reliance on conscription and threats to motivate civil defense units. The FMLN had far more recruits than arms before 1983, a situation that was exacerbated during the 1981 final offensive. However, this pattern was reversed as the war ground on and supply lines were consolidated. By the mid-1980s, the FMLN traded older M-16s for AK-47s, a sign that it could guarantee any combatant (as well as many militia) the necessary equipment (Gibb 2000: 290). The evidence presented suggests that a combination of principled motivations, material benefits, family networks and fear enabled the FMLN to overcome these challenges. As a result, the threat capacity of the rebels increased steadily throughout the war, even as the perceived perquisites declined in relative value to the individual recruit.

A similar temporal decline in incentives to join the Salvadoran military was offset by sustained provision of material benefits and forced conscription. Despite suffering humiliating defeats at various points in the war, the armed forces expanded from 12,000 to 63,000 during ten short years. Most of the government’s soldiers were young men, many in their teens that had been pressed into service for a minimum tour of two years. Conscripts from families with means could buy their way out or had already sent their children to the U.S. or Mexico, thus the conflict found the poor fighting the poor. The salary and pension benefits were significant motivations to join the military, but did not necessarily guarantee dedication on the battlefield.

³⁷³ Seligson (1996) also argues that the significance of repression is also underestimated in explaining participation in the Salvadoran conflict.

Numerous accounts reveal the frequency of surrender by the military, knowing they would likely be turned over to the Red Cross by the FMLN as prisoners. In places like the Jiboa Valley, National Guard and some civil defense units were more renowned to fight to the death. Moral incentives to join the counter-insurgent forces diminished further by the tremendous corruption within the Salvadoran military command. War became good business and many senior officers skimmed U.S. military and economic aid from every aspect of the civilian economy that they administered and pocketed pay for ghost battalions of soldiers and black market weapons sales.³⁷⁴

We might conclude that subjective or rational individual calculations were probably more important in the early years of the war in explaining choices to join the FMLN, armed forces or stay neutral. In later years, the conflict assumed its own rhythm, operating more on the basis of relatively stable commitments that had been made years before. When external factors (the interests of foreign benefactors of the conflict) began to slow this rhythm, peace talks became necessary.

What I have attempted to argue in this cursory analysis of why peasants joined revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements in the paracentral region of El Salvador is that beliefs, social networks, organizational capacity, and external factors are not easily reconciled by simple or elegant explanations of rebellion. It is true that the combined penetration of export crops transformed the paracentral economy in a way that made it unlike the rest of El Salvador, setting in motion a conflict between peasant and landowner that approximated Paige's (1975) notion of agrarian revolt. The superior land quality in this region, the historic ties of many local landowners with the death squads and proximity to the capital of San Salvador all deepened landowner intransigence toward reforms of any kind. This approximated but stopped just short of the inflexible single minded dictatorship that Wickham-Crowley refers to as "mafiacracy" (1993:9). A critical factor was U.S. support, which rather than withdrawing made El Salvador the top per capita recipient of counter-insurgent funding, but also conditioned that aid on a modest restraint of right wing extremists. Thus, all five of Wickham-Crowley's key variables explain why a rebellion began and perhaps why it ended in stalemate. However, to understand how the political experiences of the war shaped the

³⁷⁴ Barriers to Reform: A Profile of El Salvador's Military Leaders," Report to the U.S. House Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, May 21, 1990; also Millman (1989: 47)

development agenda in the post-war period, we have to dig deeper to parse the individual and collective choices behind these variables.

As was depicted in the previous chapter, the massacre at *La Cayetana* was precipitated by the show-down between recently displaced sharecroppers and an export minded landowner whose family income and political prestige were considerably dependent upon farm operations. This was a classic Paige confrontation, although Paige's explanation only tells us part of the story. The community of *La Cayetana*, like many in Tecoluca, had several years of engagement with dissident religious and political elites. Binford (2004) argues that catechists trained by Miguel Ventura, David Rodríguez, Rafael Barahona and other liberationist priests, in particular, performed critical roles as organic intellectuals (what Wickham-Crowley refers to a revolutionary entrepreneurs), in widening the social network between communities in the parish and broadening the appeal of the revolutionary participation by virtue of their religious or economic credibility in the community.

La Cayetana illustrates how the perception of costs and benefits in insurgent participation is an evolving calculus, informed as much by endogenous processes as watching and then responding to what choices your neighbors make (Popkin 1979; Markoff 1996: 273; Wood 2003: 239). Many from the community of *La Cayetana* met regularly, often in counsel with FPL leaders or David Rodríguez, to assess, rationally or otherwise, the anticipated risks of each provocative step in the process that led to the confrontation with the Angulos and the National Guard. However, the unintended outcome of the confrontation was that the martyrs of *La Cayetana* were not only the displaced sharecroppers that confronted the local landowner, but the smallholding peasants from *León de Piedra* who came to their defense. The latter were motivated by a somewhat inexplicable yet engrained sense of moral commitment to their neighbors, emboldened by an accumulated exposure to liberation theology, opposition political organizers and brief, yet effective experiences with collective action. This unintended outcome rooted in a network of reciprocal local social ties, almost obligated the survivors of *La Cayetana* to intensify collective resistance rather than pursue individual escape from the struggle. Structural factors explain only how the conflicts might take shape, not how people will react. Having achieved a solid footing as an opposition movement, the traumatic blow of state repression catapulted the peasant movement forward, rather than annihilating it as was the case in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*.

Similarly, the absence of many of these factors that prevented any prior foundation of collective action helps explain why any peasant sympathy toward the FMLN crumbled in San Ildefonso after initial hard-line policies toward reform cooperative leaders backfired. The explanation of why the state succeeded in launching a peasant insurgency in Tecoluca but suffocated another in the Jiboa Valley and why FMLN repression snuffed out latent peasant sympathies in San Ildefonso forces us to look beyond mere categories of peasant and landowner to the timing of these decisive events with respect to elite alliances and the formation of internal unity.

The political opportunity structure for revolution or counter-revolution, itself the target of strategic innovations of all parties to the conflict, provides a thin explanation of the rise and fall of the insurgency. There is much more to the story. For those who joined the FMLN (Path one), a principled commitment to changing agrarian injustice was an overwhelming attitudinal motivation, reinforced by the confidence derived from what Wood refers to as iterative collective actions (Wood 2003: 267-274). Conversely, as the survey data showed in Tables 5.4 and 5.5, the incentives for counter-insurgent participation (Path two) rested heavily on individualist material benefits, loyalty to the local elite and fear. The vast majority of Salvadorans were caught somewhere in between these choices. This third path combined efforts to escape violence by avoiding identification with either side, passive collaboration if necessary and often, temporary or permanent migration. Repression also factored into choices to take any of these three paths, but was probably not as decisive for insurgent choices as some have argued. A closer look at the interplay between the configuration of political opportunity and insurgent or counter-insurgent mobilization/empowerment strategies is the focus of the next section.

B. INSURGENT AND COUNTER-INSURGENT EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES DURING HIGH INTENSITY CONFLICT PERIOD (1980-1984)

The first five years marked a period of high intensity war. U.S. efforts to legitimize a middle road focused on soft-counter-insurgency tactics that featured land reform and engineering Duarte's victory over d'Aubuisson in the 1984 Presidential elections. The FMLN surprised many by surviving, doubling its own forces and fighting to a military stalemate against a much larger and well financed, but corrupt and undisciplined government military. Key to the insurgent empowerment strategy was the strategic conversion of its mass organizations into a civilian support population that provided logistical support and increasing service as a popular militia. The FMLN formed popular local governments in up to a third of the country under its control as an alternative to provisionally appointed mayors and resistance to the land reform.

The U.S. also invested heavily in a hard-line counter-insurgency strategy of quadrupling the Salvadoran armed forces and encouraging an unprecedented dirty war of official and unofficial violence. Backed by \$260 million in U.S. military aid and the advantage of air power, the Salvadoran government spent most of these years trying to remove the FMLN civilian support population from its zones of control, while providing a modicum of support to newly established cooperatives and beleaguered local officials. In so doing over 50,000 civilians were killed and another 500,000 displaced during this five year period. In this section, I explore the impact that these wartime empowerment strategies had on the respective populations.

1. Soft-Counter-Insurgent Mobilization: The 1980 Agrarian Reform and its impact

The defining counter-insurgency tactic of the U.S. backed moderates within the ruling junta was the land reform. The reform package was announced on March 6, 1980 just weeks before the assassination of Archbishop Romero. Land redistribution was the central component of a three part program that included nationalization of the depleted banking system and controls on the export trade of agricultural commodities.

State programs to redistribute land trace back to the 1932 rebellion, after which the government began purchasing land through a colonization program that was formalized as the Institute for Rural Colonization in 1950. Government land purchases largely ended by 1951, and by 1979, ISTA and ICR combined had acquired 114 properties totaling about 75,000 hectares (5% of total farmland). Only 82% of acquired land had been redistributed to 14,563 families.³⁷⁵ At the same time, particularly between 1966-1975, El Salvador experienced a wave of large commercial farm subdivisions into 50-200 hectares properties that were sold or distributed within landholding families.³⁷⁶ Many large farms in the lower Lempa valley and other parts of the paracentral zone were in ISTA's hands in the 1970s and had been unofficially transferred to pre-reform cooperatives before the formal land reform began.

Table 5.6 summarizes the scope of the planned and actual land reforms in 1980. Phase I of the 1980 land reform expropriated 472 estates in excess of 500 hectares, belonging to 262 owners and compensated owners in the form of 30 year bonds at six percent interest. The farms were converted into 346 cooperatives, incorporating over 34,700 peasants as members.³⁷⁷ The land was transferred in the tenancy form of "*proindiviso*," which meant that the beneficiaries were collective owners of the property that could not be broken up and sold as individual plots. These big farms alone constituted 23% of all cotton land, 36% of sugarcane cultivation, and between 9 - 14% of coffee land.³⁷⁸

In Phase II of the proposed 1980 Land Reform legislation, 1,700-1,800 properties between 100-500 hectares were to be transferred to some 36,000 peasant families – far less than

³⁷⁵ Montes (1986: 286). Some of these partitions served to resettle the population displaced from Honduras prior to the 1969 war – including part of Archie Baldochi's Hacienda Nancuchiname being perhaps the most well-known.

³⁷⁶ This wave of property sales was probably influenced by the increasing attractiveness of export crop cultivation, particularly cotton, to new investors that included a number of urban professionals. Also, it may have represented a defensive gesture to obscure concentrated land ownership as talk of redistributive reforms grew louder.

³⁷⁷ Of the properties seized, 194 were in excess of the limit, the rest (278) were cases of multiple holdings of the same owner that when summed exceeded 500 hectares. The now famous 1977 study by Eduardo Colindres lists the wealthiest landowning families, including the Dueñas (22,764 ha.) the Guirolas (28,403 ha) the Sols (15,830 ha.) the Daglios (11,711 ha.), and some 47 other families whose holdings exceeded 1000 ha. The largest expropriated farm was 6,672 ha., and PERA (1988) reported the average farm size for the 310 reform cooperatives was 686 ha.

³⁷⁸ See Thiesenhusen (1993). Strasma (1993) argues that 69% of Phase I land was used for grazing and only 9% was producing coffee.

projected.³⁷⁹ Phase II threatened the heart of the coffee, sugar and cotton sectors, but reserve holding rights would have probably protected the expropriation of the most productive farms.³⁸⁰ In any event, Phase II was never implemented.

³⁷⁹ My estimate of 270,000 hectares in land potentially distributable had Phase II been executed is derived using Browning's data on number and average size of farm holdings, see Table 7, note c. in Browning (1983). The author estimated that the Phase II reform could have affected an estimated 1,200 properties between 100 and 200 hectares and 600 properties between 200 and 500 hectares, which together would total an estimated 350,000 hectares or 25% of farm land. However, each of the owners could claim 100-150 hectares in reserve holdings from farms that averaged approximately 200 hectares. With multiple holdings by the same owner and the fact that only 97 of the 262 Phase I owners claimed and were authorized reserve holdings averaging less than 100 ha. (ISTA data, 2000), we can conservatively estimate that about half of all properties (800) would have been subject to reserve claims of 100 ha.. Subtracting reserve land totaling 80,000 ha. yields an estimate of 270,000 ha. of land that would have been transferred in Phase II.

³⁸⁰ Phase II targeted an additional 31% of all land cultivated in coffee, 30-41% in cotton, and 14% in sugarcane, to be expropriated (1971 *Censo Agropecuario*, Tables 20, 21, 26). Prosterman claims that had it been implemented, Phase II would have affected little of the 50-60,000 ha. of coffee within the 100-500 ha strata, and that most of the export crops would have been retained under reserve rights of 100-150 ha.. Paige (1996:136), citing a study by Saade y de Rosa (1983), argues that 60% of the production of coffee was found in the early 1980s on fincas between 150 and 500 hectares. In 1979, of some 1.5 million ha. of farmland (including pasture), there were 185,000 ha. of coffee, 91,000 ha. of cotton, and 27,000 ha. of sugarcane, compared to 276,000 ha of corn, 55,000 ha. of beans, 143,500 ha. of soya and 15,000 ha of rice (Pelupessy, 1998: 271). Using the estimates of Prosterman and Paige as minimum and maximum estimates, between 100,000-150,000 ha. of farmland were planted in export crops in 1979 (not including cattle). If the estimate of 80,000 ha. in reserve holdings is accurate, between 20% and 50% of the medium strata export crop farms would have been transferred.

Table 5.6 Summary of 1980 Land Reforms in El Salvador

Reform	1980 a Phase I		1980 Phase II		1980 Phase III		Total Reform c	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual b	Plan	Actual
Land area affected (ha)	247,248	216,000	270,000	0	220,000 d	66,486	737,248	282,486
% farm land d	18.4	16.1	20	0	16.4	5.0	54.8	21.0
Individuals affected	60,000	37,000 e	50,000	0	150,000	45,698	260,000	82,698
% EAP in agriculture f	10.7	6.6	8.9	0	26.7	8.2	46.3	14.8
Ave. farm size (ha)	4.9	5.8	5.4	0	1.47	1.45	2.9	3.4

Table Notes:

a. ISTA Registry of Reform Properties, obtained Feb. 2000 lists a total of 588 properties, 113 of which are properties of the “traditional” cooperative sector acquired by the Rural Colonization Institute (ICR) and ISTA prior to 1979 totaling over 65,000 hectares and redistributed to some 14,500 families as cooperatives administered by ISTA prior to the March, 1980 reforms (Checchi, 1981). Reform properties total 475, and a total Phase I Planned farm area of 247,248 ha. Actual Phase I farm area affected is obtained by subtracting the reserve area claimed by Phase I owners of 11,172 ha, and an estimated 20,000 ha. that was expropriated by ISTA and redistributed to 24-28 cooperatives that were subsequently abandoned, but then transferred later through the PTT in farms greater than 100 hectares. Thiesenhusen (1993) gives an estimate for net Phase I land at 215,167 ha, which includes the 65,000 ha. of pre-1980 land transfers in this table – contrary to data obtained from ISTA.

b. Data provided by ISTA, Feb. 2000.

c. Total farmland is estimated at 1,334,458 hectares, based on McReynolds, et al. (1988). The economically active population (EAP) in agriculture is estimated for 1980 at 560,000 based on McElhinny and Seligson (2000). Prosterman and Reidinger (1987: 154). Of the 2,100 square kilometers of surface area, on the eve of the 1980 agrarian reform, Salvadoran producers could count on only 60% (1,253 sq. km) that was both available and suitable for farming. By 1990, urbanization and deforestation had reduced this area to 55% of the total land surface (1,156 sq. km). Of this farmland, almost half (44%) is used as pasture. While land suitable for agriculture has declined since 1980, I will use the 1992 farmland estimate of 1,340 sq. km. as a baseline for measuring the impact of land redistribution. IICA (1997) estimates that only 966,000 ha. (46%) are apt for farming activities without restrictions. The FAO (1997) reduces this estimate of available land surface suitable for farming to 39%, with only 18% classified as Class I-III (land with the best agricultural potential). By either estimate, between 400,000 and 500,000 ha. in crop cultivation represents severely overexploited soil.

d. The World Bank (1998: 175) provides this higher estimate of 37,000.

In Phase III, as many as 150,000 peasant families were to become eligible to own farms no larger than seven hectares to which they already had had access as tenants.³⁸¹ The so-called “Land-to-the-Tiller” program was intended to redistribute as much as 150,000 hectares of what was typically the least productive land.³⁸² For many properties, it was not the large landowners who were affected, but rather many small and medium peasants and professionals who rented some of their land to neighbors who were affected. Phase III of the reform caused tension and even reprisals among new and former small property owners and made some reluctant to claim rented land. Brockett (1992) argued that because of the insufficient response by beneficiaries and government alike, the program was extended three times until it finally expired in June of 1984, by which time only 63,660 peasants had registered for land. Phase III was intended to eliminate the perceived problems of insecurity related to tenancy in El Salvador. However, renting among small producers continued to increase throughout the 1980s. These and other administrative problems associated with the Phase III administrative agency (FINATA) relegated many beneficiaries to continued rural poverty, and likely had a mitigating effect on broad based solidarity for more far reaching demands. Not surprisingly, Phase III did not contribute as expected to rural stability.

As a whole, the 1980 land reforms delivered less than half of what had been promised. As much as 55% of all farmland was potentially redistributable, which would have benefited as many as 260,000 landless and tenant farmers, or 46% of the economically active adult population in agriculture in 1980. Even had the planned reforms succeeded, they would have affected only about half of the population underemployed in agriculture. However, only 82,698 peasants (15% of adult 1980 economically active population in agriculture) gained access to land totaling about 21% of all farmland (282,500 hectares). The reform sector in 1981 accounted for 12% of national coffee production, 34% of cotton, 43% of sugar, 31% of fruits and vegetables and 6% of basic grains. La Paz, San Vicente and Usulután of the paracentral

³⁸¹ Although there was a seven hectare ceiling, the average Phase III parcel was 1.6 hectares. Prosterman boasted that Phase III would be “self-implementing,” because claims could be initiated by beneficiaries by registering with FINATA, which would then negotiate the price of land to be transferred with the owner. The beneficiaries would in turn owe FINATA this amount, payable over a period and at an interest rate similar to Phase I coops. Wise (1986).

³⁸² While Phase III was expected to affect 10-15% of all farmland, very little was being farmed in cash crops.

zone were some of the departments that experienced the greatest transformation, with between 15-25% of total area intervened.

Under pressure from the U.S., the land reform was implemented with haste and from the top down in the face of severe opposition and before the appropriate administrative capacity could ensure its success.³⁸³ Qualified technicians were in short supply and beneficiaries were not prepared to assume ownership, much less provide the authority or space to make decisions for themselves about operating large commercial farms. Many owners had decapitalized their properties and programs for credit, training, marketing or services were inconsistent for the cooperative sector and generally unavailable for the *Finateros*. Like much of the Salvadoran economy, agriculture suffered due to the war. The total cost of just the Phase I of the land reform at the time it was implemented was \$1.2 billion, of which half consisted of compensation to former owners. On an annual basis, the cost of reform consumed about 15% of government expenditures, which was subsidized in large part by U.S. assistance.³⁸⁴

The government (ISTA and FINATA) effectively assumed ownership of the intervened Phase I farms and Phase III properties, and the former would be co-managed with ISTA technicians until the cooperatives achieved the capacity for self-management – an intentionally vague benchmark. Describing the procedure to achieve cooperative autonomy, a 1983 report by USAID put it, “after the cooperative’s debt has been established, final negotiations between the cooperative’s board of directors and ISTA are completed, and the land transfer title is executed” (USAID 1983). However, by late 1983, only 26 titles had been issued for 426 properties, although 194 owners had been compensated (Diskin (1984: 16).

More than three fourths of the Phase I cooperatives consistently received credit between 1980-1983, much of which went to financing export production. Only about 10% of FINATA beneficiaries accessed credit or technical assistance of any kind. Cooperatives in less conflictive zones tended to outperform cohort farms in the non-reform sector (productivity and

³⁸³ Much has been written on the Salvadoran land reforms, see USAID studies by Chechi and Co. (1983), Paarlberg, Cody and Ivey (1981), Wise (1985, 1986) Gore (1987), McReynolds, Johnston, Gore and Francis (1989), Seligson, Theisenhusen, Childress and Vidales (1993) as well as independent studies by Diskin, Simon and Stephens (1982), Strasma (1983), Prosterman and Reidinger (1987), Thiesenhusen (ed.) (1989), Montoya (1991) as well as periodic assessments by the Salvadoran Ministry of Agriculture OSPA-PERA Department, ISTA and FINATA.

³⁸⁴ Paarlberg, et al. (1981: 131-133). Between 1980-1982, the U.S. provided about \$100 million to finance the land reform.

repayment of credit), but credit and commercialization increasingly became bottlenecks.³⁸⁵ Between 1980 and 1985, national production was stagnant for both basic grains and export crops, in terms of area planted and volume produced. Cotton production declined by 50%, although sugar cane replaced cotton to some extent. In the cooperative sector, the trends were similar except that production of basic grains tended to shift away from collective to individual production (Wise 1986: 34-42).

A shortage of qualified technicians with institutional incentives to expedite the self-sufficiency of the cooperatives, proved to be a central and persistent weakness of ISTA.³⁸⁶ The promotion of cooperatively organized production dropped significantly after 1980.³⁸⁷ By 1985, only 32% of transferred Phase I land was farmed collectively.³⁸⁸ ISTA technicians blamed cooperative problems on “*asistencialismo*” or dependency on transferred goods and services, backward looking work habits and corruption among the cooperative members themselves.³⁸⁹ Interviews of ISTA officials surprisingly still employed nearly two decades after the agrarian reform revealed as late as 1998 a paternalistic, often contemptuous view of the *campesino* that was reportedly widespread among the land reform agency staff in the paracentral region.

The beneficiaries of both Phases I and III were expected to pay off the agrarian debt over 20-30 years, although few were informed of the amount.³⁹⁰ Debt continued to accumulate

³⁸⁵ See Montoya (1991) and Childress, Seligson Vidales, and Thiesenhusen (1993) for different analyses of the productivity and other measures of cooperative sector versus private sector performance. Cooperative produce was purchased by parastatal marketing boards. Cooperative debt accumulated rapidly and in turn ISTA dependence deepened.

³⁸⁶ Paarlberg, et al. (1981: 46-50) ISTA technicians often viewed the cooperative’s dependence as the basis for their own job security, as well as a means of extorting additional income, thus few incentives existed to expedite cooperative autonomy.

³⁸⁷ By 1983, USAID reports that over 50% of coop farms had no social promoters – those responsible for aiding ISTA in the conscientization of the membership. Diskin (1983:27) reports that ISTA viewed social promoters as “excess baggage.”

³⁸⁸ ISTA, compared to 11% individually, 22% pasture, 16% forest, 4% infrastructure, 8% idle, and 7% unusable.

³⁸⁹ Interview, Ing. Rolando García and Lic. González Amaya, ISTA San Vicente; Aparicio Mejía ISTA Guadalupe.

³⁹⁰ Confusion about the debt total stemmed from the altering of pre-war land values by owner’s to maximize compensation while bearing little association with the actual productive value of the property. In many cases, the

due to the general decline of agriculture and terms of trade, compounding 9.5% interest, and increased lending. By 1984, 95% of the cooperatives could not service their total debt load. The issue of the cooperative debt would prevent many titles from being issued, prolonging dependence on ISTA and subjecting cooperatives to debt reduction deals by the government. Trading debt reduction for accession to individual titles would lead to the breakup of many collective properties in the late 1980s. The mounting agrarian debt would also emerge as one of main producer grievances in the post-war period bringing the cooperative sector closer to the FMLN. The administrative defects of the reform alone created tremendous obstacles for development in the reform sector.

Violence surged in El Salvador in 1980 and cooperatives were among the groups targeted by both the right and left. In the first four years, some 8,000-10,000 FINATA beneficiaries were evicted by recalcitrant owners, equaling nearly 15% of the total number of applicants. USAID found that by early 1984, as many as one-third of FINATA beneficiaries were not farming the land for which they had registered, “because they had been threatened, evicted or had disappeared.”³⁹¹ By 1985, between 28 and 48 cooperatives located in conflictive zones had been abandoned at some point (the most affected departments being San Vicente and Usulután).³⁹² The UCS, which claimed affiliation with nine Phase I cooperatives and to have organized 108 cooperatives among the Phase III beneficiaries, reported that 90 members were killed in the post-reform violence targeting cooperatives. ACOPAI, which claimed to have organized 78 cooperatives among the FINATA beneficiaries, also experienced selective repression of some members (Paarlberg, et al, (1981: 119).

Most of the violence toward the coop sector was attributed to the right.³⁹³ Many coop leaders were assassinated to block the reforms as well as for reluctance to pay protection money to the military. Attacks and intimidation by both sides enabled the military to extract

landowners were overcompensated, and cooperative debt was set unrealistically high. The FMLN refused to recognize any legitimate cooperative debt.

³⁹¹ USAID internal FINATA audit, cited in Brockett (1992: 144).

³⁹² ISTA, cited in Paarlberg, et al, (1981: 66-67) and Wise (1986: 25) At least 9 of these farms were located in the department of San Vicente (Sihuatepeque, El Coyol, San Nicolás, Los Angeles, La Cañada Arenera, El Chorro, Guajoyo, La Joya, El Marquezado), 7 more in Usulután and 3 in La Páz.

³⁹³ Richard V. Oulahan, AIFLD Director, memorandum, Nov. 12, 1980.

protection insurance. According to one source in ISTA at the time, an estimated 40% of the peasant cooperatives were paying tribute to the army at an average of \$120 per month for each of the six to eight soldiers who “guard” the farms.³⁹⁴

Early FMLN policy toward the cooperatives was inconsistent, but began on the premise that compensation to former owners was unjustified, and thus opposed the mediation by or repayment to ISTA or FINATA. Those properties transferred to known ORDEN members were attacked, while others transferred to neutral or sympathetic populations were generally treated more benignly. According to Elisabeth Wood’s detailed investigation of cooperative experiences in contested regions of Usulután, sympathies toward the FMLN varied between active and passive collaboration (Wood 2003, especially chapters 6 & 7).

According to former UCS leader Leonel Gómez who narrowly survived a massacre of his cooperative in 1980, “Phase I farms that were intervened by ISTA under military escort were turned over to the salaried workers who had been steadily employed there. They were trusted and hence relatively conservative campesinos” (Gettelman et al. 1982). Families with ties to a piece of land were more likely to remain in the conflictive areas and thus be available for civil defense service. Anecdotal evidence from several *cantónes* that included FINATA beneficiaries in the Jiboa Valley seems to bear this out. New and old landowners tended to stay and resist the FMLN, sometimes vigorously, while landless populations were more likely to seek refuge in the cities and towns.³⁹⁵

As exemplified in the killing of coop leaders in San Ildefonso in 1980, the FMLN relationship with the reform sector was skeptical and badly mishandled at the outset in the expectation that a military victory over the reformist junta was within their grasp. As insurrection became less probable and support for the agricultural economy fell, ties between the FMLN and the coop sector would recover out of mutual interest.

³⁹⁴ Raymond Bonner, *New York Times*, Aug. 3, 1981. Gómez is cited in Bonner (1984: 200). Pyes (1983: 8) estimates that between 1980-1983, ORDEN was responsible for most of the killing of 260 local and national leaders of the Christian Democrat Party, including 35 mayors.

³⁹⁵ Finateros in *Candelaria Abajo* and coffee smallholders in San Emigdio (both in the Jiboa Valley) were known for their effective service in the civil patrols, while other neighboring villages of mostly renters or landless jornaleros such as Loma Alta in Nuevo Tepétitan, Joya de Munguía, Guadalupe and San Pedro Aguas Calientes, Verapáz were abandoned in the early 1980s.

The 1980 reforms affected between 10% and 13% of total farmland in each of the three case study areas, but the impact was not uniform. In the Jiboa Valley, with the exception of one 200 hectare Phase I farm, most of the redistributed land was in small to medium Phase III properties – mostly low quality land unsuitable for coffee or sugar cane. The only reform cooperative, *El Nuevo Oriente* in Verapáz, had employed 300 *colonos* to farm about 210 hectares of rice, corn, sugar cane, bananas and cattle before the war. Fabio Releyea Morán had come to own the farm after several transfers in the 1970s. Morán along with some of the workforce abandoned the property under FMLN pressure in late 1979. It was then occupied by peasants from neighboring Cuscatlán that were sympathetic to the rebels. The military massacred eight squatters and the land lay idle for over a year. ISTA eventually purchased it and relocated peasants from the village of *El Marquezado* in the municipality of San Vicente, which had been depopulated by the violence in May of 1981. The coop members maintained strict neutrality during the war, thereby avoiding the worst violence.³⁹⁶

The largest FINATA transfer in the Jiboa Valley was a 120 hectare property, the *Hacienda Candelaria*, owned by the Navarrette family that was broken up among 125 beneficiaries living in the villages of *Candelaria Arriba y Abajo*, which bordered Cristiani's *Finca El Carmen* in the town of San Cayetano Istepeque. Some of the FINATEROS suggested that their newly acquired land was the only reason they did not flee during the war, thus ensuring a permanent civil defense force.³⁹⁷

Most of those who were forced to sell their land to FINATA were small and medium owners. Some local elites are still quite resentful at having to part with even these modest holdings, while others have rationalized the sacrifice. Max Menjivar is one local landowner forced to sell to FINATA. Menjivar at 79 years of age still pays his permanent and day laborers personally from a small desk in large house that faces the central plaza in the town of Guadalupe. The house is flanked by the church and the mayor's office and once served as the National Guard post. Through hard work and some alleged opportunism with others' misfortune, Menjivar scrabbled together 70 hectares of coffee, sugar cane and fruit orchards, plus cattle and cattle feed factory. Still, he considered himself a "small producer" who was

³⁹⁶ Interview, Valentín Flores, Cooperative President, El Nuevo Oriente, Verapáz, Aug. 5, 1998.

³⁹⁷ Interviews, Candelaria Arriba, anonymous, July-Aug. 1998

singled out when he was forced to sell off 17.5 hectares of lower grade land to FINATA.³⁹⁸ Few of the largest and most feared coffee elites lost any property in the Jiboa Valley, perhaps because their holdings on the volcano were below the 500 hectare limit or because peasants in the region were not organized to claim the land.

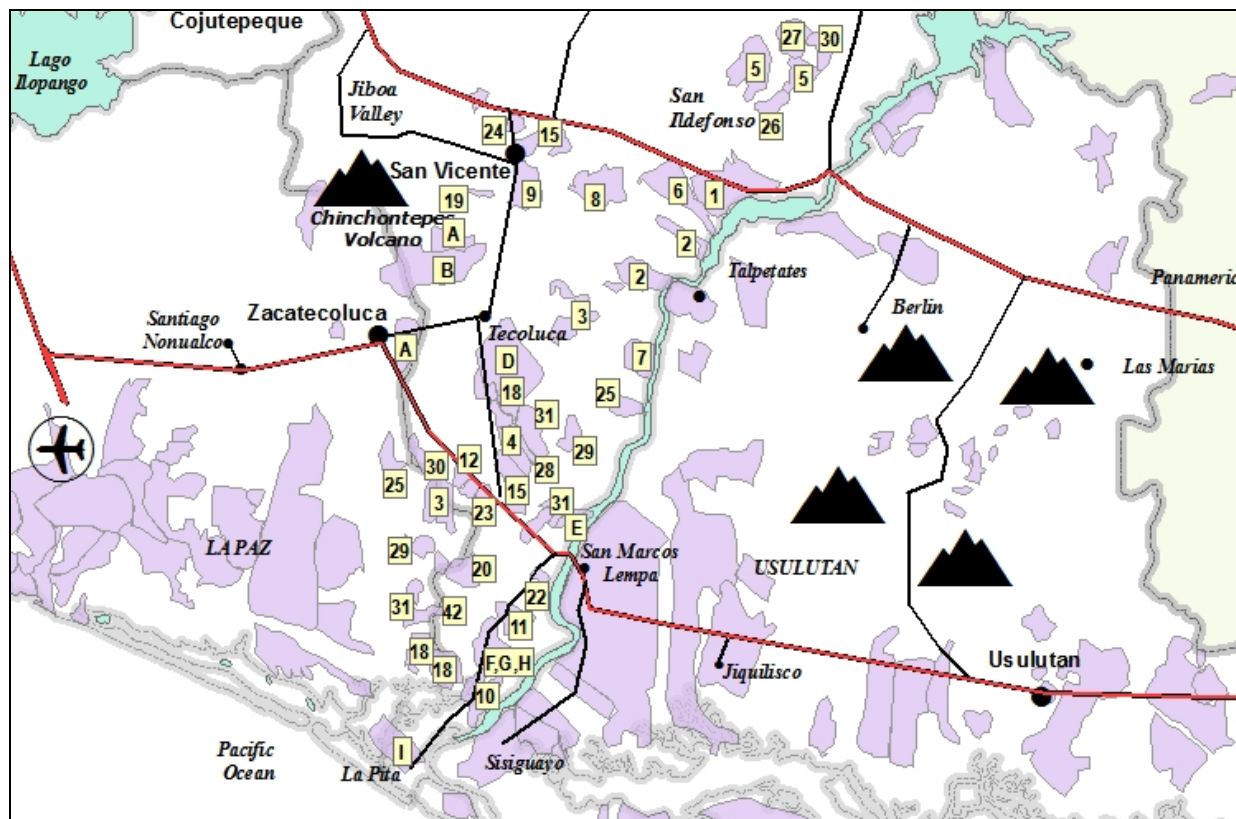


Figure 5.2 Land Reform Properties in Paracentral Region (San Vicente properties are numbered and listed in Appendix (Table F.2))

In Tecoluca, by contrast, many of the most despised landowners had their properties intervened. In addition to the Angulos, many notorious death squad, oligarchy and local elite families had large farms intervened (Sagrera, Molina, Borgonovo Pohl, Cristiani, Torres, Nuñez, Homberger and Carballo, among others.³⁹⁹ By ISTA accounts, 15 farms were

³⁹⁸ Interview, Max Menjivar, Aug. 4, 1998. It was not clear how the land claim was initiated, due to the relative passivity of most tenant farmers in the area. Menjivar owns two houses facing the town square, one formerly the residence of the National Guard and now the local CENTA office. In addition, Menjivar controlled several small businesses, including a pharmacy and bus company.

³⁹⁹ The names of former property owners and farm information were obtained through various sources, including interviews, monographs by FUNDE (1997) and Fogaroli and Stowell (1997) on Tecoluca, ISTA and FINATA

intervened after March 1980, in addition to another 15 farms that had already been transferred to ISTA, for a total of 8,767 hectares – or 30% total farmland.⁴⁰⁰ Phase III was considerably less important (725 ha) in Tecoluca. The actual impact of Phase I interventions (about 10%) was significantly reduced due to the abandonment of many farms. Some of these same properties and others would be repopulated by the former cooperative members and FMLN supporters or combatants (as well as six farms that went to the demobilized soldiers) and titled in the postwar land transfer program.

In Tecoluca, where communities had become organized and the FMLN established political allegiance, the militarized takeover of farms and the placement of ORDEN members as beneficiaries under the leadership of ISTA was not acceptable. A military outpost was placed at the Guajoyo cooperative, site of the infamous 1977 UTC occupation, and ORDEN members from the urban town center of Tecoluca were invited by ISTA to farm the property. The new reform cooperative was then organized into civil defense units that accompanied military patrols and informed on suspected rebels in neighboring communities who were summarily executed. The coop endured one planting season before the FMLN used violence and intimidations to drive them out.⁴⁰¹ By early 1981, the only two surviving cooperatives in Tecoluca were the TECOOP savings and loan and Los Naranjos in the lower Lempa valley.

The agrarian reform experience In Tecoluca was by no means uniform. As many as thirteen ISTA or FINATA cooperatives survived in some form, although some were idle for as long as five or six years. Cooperative loyalties to the government were consolidated with the repopulation of displaced civil defense forces from other departments, as in the case of *La Betania II* situated strategically at the intersection of the littoral highway and a through road to the town center. These pro-government cooperatives were perhaps singled out for more severe attacks during the war. FMLN combatants made several references to human rights violations in references to excessive attacks against cooperative members at La Betania. The FMLN

registries obtained in 2000, FMLN proposed land inventories, and PTT land transfer program registries. The latter databases were shared by Elisabeth Wood, whose assistance on the land question has proven invaluable. Antonio Alvarez of FUNDESA, who worked closely with the PTT program, also provided data on transferred properties in the paracentral zone.

⁴⁰⁰ ISTA database of Phase I properties, accessed in Jan. 2000.

⁴⁰¹ Interview, Don Eliseo, Socorro.

negotiated collaboration with nearly all cooperatives in the area, although those located closer to military garrisons in Santa Cruz Porrillo, San Nicolás and the town center Tecoluca, collaborated less than others. In almost every case, the ISTA and FINATA farms that endured in Tecoluca shifted toward individual production, with only a few groups setting aside a small portion of their land to be farmed collectively.

The disruption of the cooperatives that had been established prior to 1980 did not always generate greater support for the FMLN. Before the war, *Los Naranjos* was a 325 hectare farm that cultivated melons, cashews, corn and cattle on the sandy coastal plains several kilometers from the Pacific Ocean. The farm was owned by Luís Torres Portillo, son of former PCN Minister of Defense, Fidel Torr  s and also owner of *Petacones* cheese processing plant in Santa Cruz Porrillo. The farm was sold to ISTA by the Torres family to avoid losing any compensation, and in turn Los Naranjos was turned over to the *colono* population before 1980. A single corn harvest was all that could be achieved by the cooperative before production in the entire lower Lempa valley was disrupted by the war. Many in the cooperative fled to neighboring departments, and the land was eventually worked by FMLN civilian support populations sporadically over the following years.

People began returning to farm *Los Naranjos* in 1986, largely independent of the FPL. Some were prior beneficiaries of the agrarian reform, both from the original *Los Naranjos* cooperative or other nearby cooperatives. Others were not. In 1991, *Los Naranjos* became one of about 100 properties claimed by the FMLN in Tecoluca as part of the negotiations to end the war. Among the current beneficiaries of the post-war land transfer program, in which a fraction of the original ISTA property was claimed, only about half are demobilized FPL militia or combatants. Among some original reform *cooperativistas* there is a notable ambivalence toward the FMLN the experience of losing access to their land in 1981.⁴⁰²

In sum, the 1980 land reform had only a modest impact in terms of altering the pre-war agrarian structure in Tecoluca, and failed almost completely in its counter-insurgent aim of arresting FPL activity in the region. However, the attempted reform did succeed in harnessing some peasant counter-insurgent support in the most defensible areas.

⁴⁰² Interviews, Los Naranjos coop members, Aug. 19, 1998; Fogaroli and Stowell (1997)

In San Ildefonso, the reforms had the deepest, if uneven, influence in reshaping the social and economic landscape. The reform cooperative influence predated the war in places like highland San Ildefonso, due to experiences of nearby cooperatives in San Jose los Almendros, San Felipe, San Lazaro, and El Guayabo that formed as early as 1976. In these villages, *cooperativistas* viewed with reservations both political extremes as a threat to the economic conditions that appeared to be slowly improving and that had been achieved without violence. In turn, these early cooperative communities were actively organized civil patrollers during the war and yielded few recruits for the FMLN.⁴⁰³

Only a small amount of land within San Ildefonso was officially redistributed through FINATA in 1980, the largest of which was San Francisco de la Cruz (220 hectares). Claims had been registered through FINATA for several other properties, but they were never formally transferred. Perhaps reflecting Orlando Arevalo's influence within FINATA, none of the lowland properties in San Ildefonso where Arevalo worked as a youth were claimed despite high levels of landlessness and the concentration of farmland within a handful of families. Among the highland properties where FINATA had initiated transfer, centrist PDC peasant organizations, such as Arevalo's ACOPAI in San Francisco de la Cruz and the larger PDC coop federation FESACORA in Las Canoas, competed for allegiance. These local battles for peasant affiliation reflected institutional fights for hegemony within the land reform agencies themselves.⁴⁰⁴

Four large local landowners were forced to sell to ISTA (Aguilúz, Lazos, Navarrette, and Hernandez).⁴⁰⁵ However, some of these properties were below the 500 hectare limit and were sold to ISTA because the owners were almost bankrupt and were facing liens. Other landowners escaped the land reform due to lack of organization among the labor force or favorable relations with land reform officials. Most of the reform properties were located in the highland sector of San Ildefonso, while lowland owners generally escaped interventions.

⁴⁰³ Marchand (1996); Interview Amilcar Palacios, FMLN ex-combatant, Apastepeque, Aug. 2, 1998; Interview, Lucio Adalberto Mendez, Coop President, San Jose los Almendros, Oct. 13, 1998

⁴⁰⁴ See Wise (1985) referring to a CLUSA evaluation of the organizational structure of ISTA and FINATA.

⁴⁰⁵ Phase I cooperatives included Guachipilin, Sihuatepeque, San Pablo Canales, Izcatal and Los Almendros. Larger FINATA properties included San Francisco de la Cruz and Las Canoas.

Among the highland communities, the land reform represented the first visible change in peasant-owner-military relations. Combined with little to no prior concrete experiences of collective political organization, exposure only through gossip about the work of nearby liberationist Catholic priests, and the damage caused by a poorly conceived FMLN policy toward the coop leaders, the land reform had a moderating effect that seemed to satisfy what San Ildefonso's colonos wanted most – their own small piece of land.⁴⁰⁶

As bad as were the working conditions under landowners like Manuel Aguilúz, the president of the Sihuatepeque cooperative recalled that the land reform was no panacea, bringing both benefits and costs:

ISTA came one day and told us that the land was theirs, and acted as if they were in control – like the ‘nuevo patrono’ or new boss. They said the land was not going to be given as a gift and we would have to pay. But they ended up destroying a good part of the cooperative patrimony through poor administration. Credit was given collectively, but we had to separate out our part from that which went to pay for ISTA promoters. Then ISTA stopped coming, and we received no more credit. Despite not having a title, we organized ourselves during the war.⁴⁰⁷

As flawed as the reform implementation was, it nevertheless was the key to peasant sympathies in this region. This made the FMLN assassinations of new cooperative leaders in Sihuatepeque, Las Canoas and other highland villages of San Ildefonso all the more damaging to long-term relations. In the *Ceros de San Pedro* front in northern San Vicente and in parts of Usulután, the cooperative appeal established a clear buffer zone between insurgent bases and military garrisons.

After about a year of functioning under ISTA, the violence of the war and an FMLN prohibition of planting on area farms, forced most of the San Ildefonso cooperative communities to be abandoned between 1981 and 1984. People fled to other villages in lowland San Ildefonso and as far as San Miguel. With authorization of FMLN command in the region, people returned to the zone to plant but were forced to pay a war tax to the insurgents. One group of coop leaders complained that even this policy was implemented by the FMLN with an

⁴⁰⁶ Interviews with San Ildefonso coop members in the villages of Sihuatepeque, Guachipilín, Limón, Las Canoas, San Francisco de la Cruz, Los Almendros, May and August, 1998.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview, Juan Martínez, president Cooperative Sihuatepeque, Aug. 24, 1998.

unnecessarily heavy hand, with insensitivity to the meticulous attention that peasant farmers exercised in improving their minimal margins of income. Begrudgingly, most of them collaborated, although without the threat of coercion many would probably have not done so voluntarily.⁴⁰⁸

The 1980 land reform was described with euphoric enthusiasm by its U.S. sponsors, with predictions that it would effectively eliminate the FMLN within a year. The land reform undoubtedly loosened the grip that the landed elite had upon the country. Yet it fell short of its aim to spawn a class of middle income family farms and would ultimately have a small effect on the structure of inequality. As a top-down reform, cooperative member participation was not prioritized and allowed some owners to escape where local peasants were unorganized to claim the land. Where land was transferred, the agrarian reform failed as platform for development. In the years following the land reform, it became clear that many technical and political defects would rob the reforms of their potential impact.

De Janvry (1981) long ago distinguished between land reform and agrarian reform. The former involves some redistribution of land holdings, while the latter contemplates a range of policy adjustments that impact all stages in the agricultural production chain. In El Salvador, U.S. policy advisors and military officers opted for a counter-insurgent land reform that was inconsistent and expedient, often mixing limited and partly implemented reforms with repression.

Segundo Montes argued that the land reform may have had the opposite effect than intended, sharpening the underlying agrarian conflicts that it was designed to soften. Among the limitations cited by Montes in 1980, was “the resistance, at least passively, of the peasantry that has not been taken into account in the reform, that systematically distrusts the promise of benefits and gifts, that prefers individual property as a guarantee of subsistence and security, and that has not been prepared nor educated for a solution that is not understood” (Montes, 1986: 316). This early epitaph of the Salvadoran land reform was not only a critique of the government’s counter-insurgent aims, but also a warning to the insurgent project of the FMLN that also rested on certain assumptions of peasant preferences. It is to this insurgent mobilization strategy and consequent hard-line reaction that I now turn.

⁴⁰⁸ Interview, coop and community leaders from Sihuatepeque, El Limón, Aug. 24, 1998.

2. The FMLN “Final Offensive” and Hard-line Counter-Insurgent Reaction

During the nine months of 1980 after the land reform was announced, the FMLN prepared for its first concerted offensive. It began on Jan. 10, 1981, when the FMLN staged attacks on forty different cities and towns across the country. Overall, the total estimated number of trained FPL combatants in the paracentral zone by the time of the offensive was 50, 40 of which were in Zacatecoluca and another 10 in San Vicente. By early 1982, there were as many as 400 FPL combatants in and around Tecoluca, and between 1,000 and 1,500 in San Vicente.⁴⁰⁹ Still, only a small fraction of these combatants were armed and other equipment and clothing were in short supply. The battles for Tecoluca and Zacatecoluca offer some sense of the impact of these initial confrontations of the civil war and the challenge of early years of the insurgency.⁴¹⁰

In the paracentral zone, the principal target of the FMLN during the 1981 offensive was the army barracks in Zacatecoluca. Two columns of about 200 FMLN combatants participated. Only about one in five were armed and trained, the majority were unarmed masses experiencing their first military operation. In the initial attack that began at dusk on the 10th, one column entered from the volcano to the northeast, and the other from the littoral highway along the southeast. The latter column was delayed in entering the city, and so the expected coordination of the beginning of the attack was impossible. The rebels also failed to catch the military off-guard. Heavy fighting was initiated by a perimeter defense of the city that delayed most of the second FMLN column before they could reach planned positions in the city. The first column was quickly pinned down by superior military firepower. Calls to insurrection went generally unheeded, leaving the FMLN insurgents on their own. Home made mortars using makeshift artillery were fired into the military barracks, but only one discharged. The

⁴⁰⁹ Interviews, FPL ex-combatants, Pablo Parada Andino, Norberto Contreras, Audelio Díaz, Pablo Anaya.

⁴¹⁰ Based on interviews with FMLN combatants, narratives from Moroni and Spencer (1995: 96, 117) and Benítez Manaut (1989).

military counter-attacked with armored cars mounted with machine guns, which effectively disrupted the attack. Without communications equipment, the insurgent attack disintegrating into isolated shoot outs, with FMLN combatants carefully using the few rounds that they had. Command of the FMLN operation broke down and became disorganized, although individual fighting endured for almost 24 hours before government reinforcements arrived from Usulután. Having sustained heavy losses, the FMLN withdrew at night on Jan. 11. According to one source, the FMLN suffered 8 killed and 10 wounded in the attack. A second similar attack was mounted two days later.

The attacks on the smaller town of Tecoluca were perhaps the longest sustained battle of the entire offensive, enduring five days. On Jan. 10, a group of about 30 poorly armed combatants attacked the National Guard post with plans to surround and lay siege to it. Only 10 of the FMLN forces carried guns or had military training. They lacked any radio communication with a central command. The post, under the authority of Guard Sergeant Chele Ramos, was renowned for the beheadings of dozens of suspected insurgents. The remains of the victims were reputedly buried in a common grave within the building. The fighting began in late afternoon and the call for insurrection resulted in about 150 people joining the combatants, digging trenches and constructing barricades. But the FMLN expectation of a massive popular insurrection to rise up in support of the attack did not occur. The FMLN inflicted heavy casualties on the Guard, whittling down resistance to five Guardsmen, before support arrived from 5th Brigade in nearby San Vicente. The FMLN squad commander was killed and two more combatants were wounded before withdrawing from the town after the first day of the attack, followed by sustained but less effective attacks over the next few days.

Several lessons could be drawn from the first coordinated action of the insurgency. First, the FMLN was able to inflict significant damage despite facing a larger and much better equipped and trained adversary. Second, the offensive served as a test of strength and commitment, both for individual combatants and as a group. Third, the failure to trigger greater popular support raised questions about the innate sympathies or level of fear among the urban population. As one combatant put it, “the offensive taught us one of the key strategic errors we had made in discounting the need to ensure urban popular support after we had pulled all of our people from the cities.” Pablo Anaya argues that, “the FPL estimated it had

sympathy from 60% of the people in Zacatecoluca, and even though many refused to join the battle out of fear, the offensive revealed many other equally valuable offers of logistical collaboration.”⁴¹¹

Third, the January offensive unlocked the flow of U.S. support to the Salvadoran provisional government. The apparent irreversibility of the land reform and the FMLN attack, combined with the shift in the level of support by the U.S. government all served to motivate the Salvadoran security forces and death squads to step up indiscriminate violence against the civilian population.

A Rand Institute review of the U.S. dominated policy of “low intensity war” observed that, “fully aware that Salvadoran society was one of the *sickest* and most repressive in Latin America,” the U.S. sought to marginalize the “powerful extremists *on both sides*.” The strategy was two-pronged: “fortify the Salvadoran armed forces to wear down the rebels in combat, and bolster democracy so as to weaken the rebels’ claim to legitimacy” (Schwarz 1991: v-ix). In discourse, equal responsibility for the “sickness” of Salvadoran society is assigned to the extremism of both sides, although in practice the U.S. allied with the Salvadoran military, the *de facto* power within the provisional government, to eliminate or transform the more dangerous threat implied by the FMLN taking power.

The years of 1980-83 were a period of extreme violence that attempted to disarticulate the capacity for mobilization and resistance that had been achieved during the previous decade. Violence by the right-wing paramilitary organizations, the National Guard and the Salvadoran Armed Forces (FAES) became indiscriminate. However, the United Nations Truth Commission established in the Peace Accords to formally investigate political violence during the war, strongly suggests that the violence was disproportionately born by the opposition communities perceived to side with the FMLN. While the impact of the violence defies simple statistical descriptions, the numbers are sobering.

Between 1980-1992, as many as 82,000 Salvadorans were killed the vast majority by the military and state security forces.⁴¹² Figure 5.3 and Table 5.7 show that San Vicente

⁴¹¹ Interview, Pablo Anaya, April 1998.

⁴¹² Total does not include military deaths. See Seligson and McElhinny (1996). A 1995 survey by the University of Pittsburgh found that 55% of the families who reported losing family members in the war identified themselves with the FMLN, compared to only 30% who identified themselves with ARENA.

experienced the second highest per capita murder rate during the war, 127 per 100,000.⁴¹³ The intensity of the civil war in the paracentral zone can also be summarized by the fact that San Vicente was the only department in El Salvador to report a negative population growth rate (-0.33%) between 1971-92 (DIGESTYC, 1997).

In and around Tecoluca, the violence was particularly severe, where no fewer than 25 individual massacres were perpetrated between 1980 and 1982 by the government security forces in coordination with the local paramilitary forces killing over 3,000 people, including many women and children.⁴¹⁴ The town itself was subject to approximately twenty two attacks by the FMLN, by one ex-mayor's count. Most of the massacres in the region were never reported in the media nor confirmed officially by the U.N. Truth Commission, but were recounted in graphic detail by survivors and former combatants. Unlike some of the most publicized government massacres in *El Mozote* and *Sumpul*, this wave of violence in the Tecoluca region has never been fully described.

While the violence throughout the paracentral region generally targeted populations suspected of actively collaborating with the FMLN, no one felt secure. Informants fingered innocent families out of self-preservation and many personal scores were settled. Many people who were otherwise politically neutral were forced to choose sides. In San Ildefonso, a PDC activist who worked as a construction supervisor recalled how the sergeant in charge of organizing the civil patrols had raped and killed a young girl from the town. Each Sunday during military training and field duty in neighboring Villa Dolores, the sergeant would instruct the trainees how to kill and mutilate the corpses of suspected subversives to create a climate of fear. He also threatened that a similar punishment was in store for civil patrollers that did not report for duty. Like many serving in the civil defense only out of fear, the man decided to flee to Mexico with his family for six months until a new commander for the area was appointed.

In all three case study communities, the wartime violence left a lasting negative impression in all three regions. However, an important distinction can be made. By my

⁴¹³ Data is from the U.N. (1993) Truth Commission Departmental distribution of reported violations. Chalatenango, Cuscatlán and Morazán were the other departments with the highest reported death rates during the war.

⁴¹⁴ Sources for these massacres include Americas Watch (1991, 1993), Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (1978, 1984), EPICA (1990), United Nations (1993), survivor and witness testimony, news reports, human rights reports.

estimation based on interviews, the level of fighting in San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley was a significant order of magnitude less than Tecoluca. Towns in contested and government controlled zones, such as San Ildefonso or the Jiboa Valley were attacked and occupied by the FMLN throughout the war on an average of four or five instances, at times suffering heavy bombing in government counter-attacks, yet never approaching the near constant fighting endured in Tecoluca. Many families living in the town centers in all three municipalities that had the means, sent their children abroad to avoid conscription.

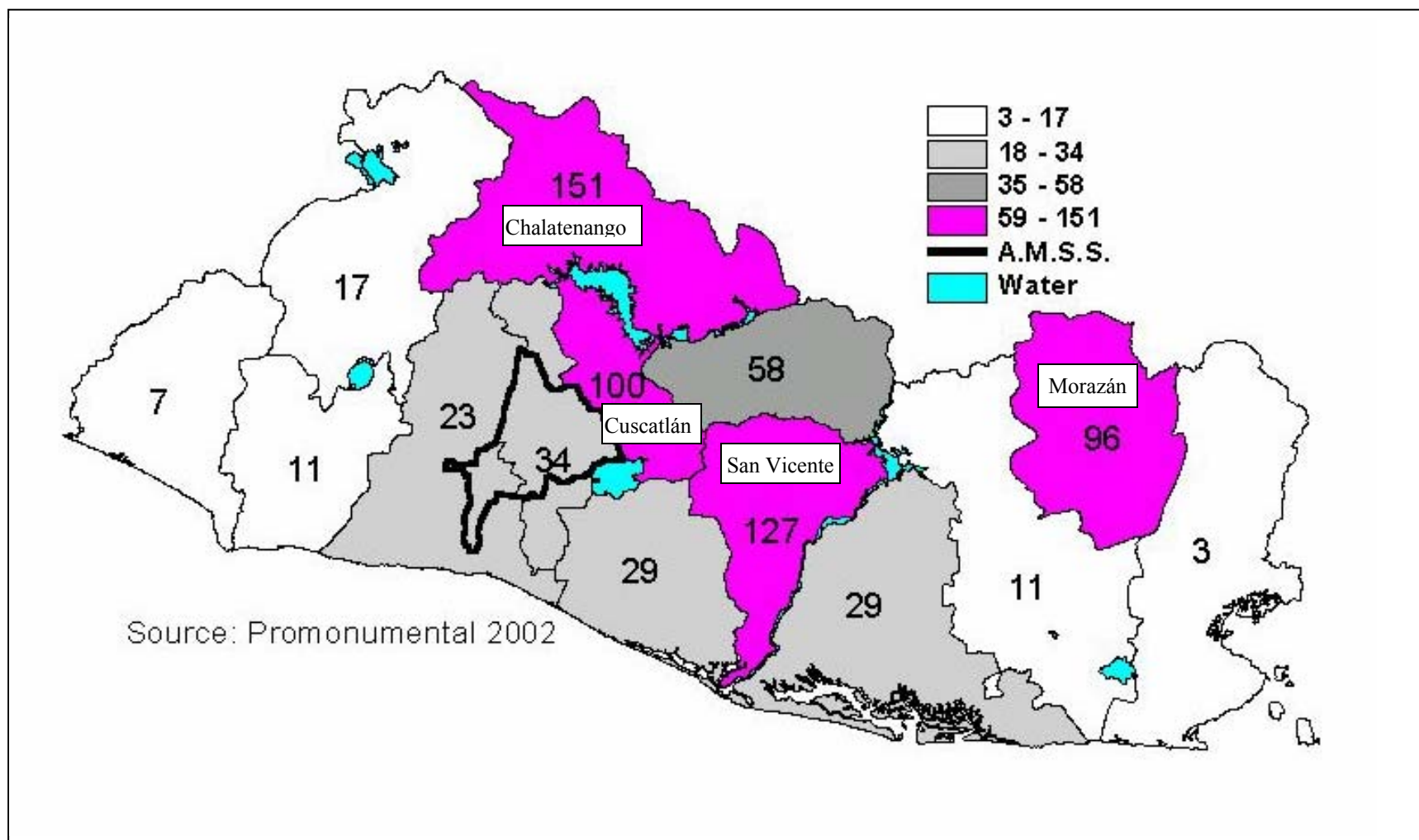


Figure 5.3 Homicides per 100,000 population during the Civil War, 1980-1992

Table 5.7 Unofficial Paracentral Zone Massacres

1960s?	Hacienda El Pulpito, San Ildefonso	6
1974	La Cayetana, Tecoluca	6
1976	La Cayetana,	¿
Mar 27, 1978	San Pedro Perlupan, Cuscatlan	27
1979	S. Zacatecoluca & El Golfo, San Juan Nonualco	¿
Mar 23, 1980	San Pedro Aguas Calientes, Verapaz	20
Abr 4-9, 1980	San Francisco Angulo (Las Lomas), Tecoluca	¿
Abr 30, 1980	Ctn El Jobo, El Espino, Zacate	10
Nov 14, 1980	Llanos Grandes, Tecoluca	11
May 1, 1980	San Benito, Tecoluca	300
Sept 27, 1980	Ctn Platanares, Zacatecoluca	8
Nov 1980	Cooperativa Nvo Oriente, Verapaz	8
May 1, 1981	San Benito, Tecoluca	¿
Abr 6, (Jun 4) 1981	Hac La Pena, Volcan Tecoluca (16 day mil. operation)	400
Jun 19-20, 1981	Las Lomas, Campanario, San Benito, Tecoluca	¿
Jun-Aug, 1981	San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca	43
Jul 25, 1981	San Francisco Angulo, Tecoluca (survivors of La Pena) women & children (150)	52-55
Oct 30, 1981	Las Lomas del Pajaro, Tecoluca	220
Oct 23, 1981	Hac. Linares, San Agustín,	365
Jan. 25, 1982	Campanario, Tecoluca (evangelical church)	90
1982	Cerro los Filos	15
May 12, 1982	SF Angulo, Tec	45
Jun 19/25, 1982	La Raya, Tecoluca	300-560
Jul/Aug 27, 1982	La Pita, Tecoluca	40/75
Jul/Aug 82	La Conacastada-SAndres Achiotes, San Juan Buenavista, Tecoluca	300-400
Aug. 17, 1982	San Jorge, San Jeronimo, Santa Clara	23
Aug. 17, 1982	Ctn San Alfonsito, Cso El Chilillo, San Esteban	20

Yet, the memories of one or several violent events recounted by the residents of San Ildefonso or the Jiboa Valley, while varying in terms of the frequency or intensity in each narrative, stand out in testimony as the single defining characteristic of the civil war. There is an implicit argument in these narratives that everyone generally suffered the same. In government control or contested zones, little distinction was made between experiences involving the hardships caused by single instances of the aerial bombing, the destruction of an FMLN attack on a town center, or a kidnapping, with the almost constant military operations in Tecoluca throughout the war.

Violence, like access to land and shifting political alliances, represented together the principal features of the political opportunity structure for strategic survival choices by peasants and communities during the war. The violence was traumatizing in every case, yet in the Tecoluca narratives of the war it was only one factor among many that configured the political experiences of many informants. Despite the relatively lower intensity of violence in the other case study communities by comparison, it nevertheless played a more definitive role in shaping political experiences there. It is to this comparison that I turn next.

3. Insurgent and counter-insurgent competition over local government

As the insurrection's failure sunk in, the FMLN combatants suffered a decline in morale, exacerbated by the dramatic supply shortage and the onslaught of the first sustained military counter-offensive in the first half of 1981. The coming years of hunger, illness, lack of adequate equipment and constant flight were the most difficult of the entire war. These first years of the war were a test of principled commitment and practical survival for the FMLN forces. In the paracentral region, the FMLN faced several paramount challenges. The first involved expanding force capacity, both in terms of size and effectiveness. The second involved laying the foundation for alternative local governance through a policy of maintaining a civilian base within the conflict zone despite the devastating level of violence. A third hurdle involved achieving closer coordination between the various insurgent organizations operating in the zone – a key factor that prevented the optimal timing of first offensive in 1980. Overcoming each of these challenges was crucial first and foremost for survival, but also in the formation of an insurgent experience that is distinct from the pre-war political culture.

The scorched earth policy deployed by the Salvadoran military during the early years of the war destroyed much of planted food and forced the FPL to constantly relocate its civilian mass base to avoid entrapment. Some of worst massacres occurred during this period when large groups of people were caught trying to evade military incursions. Many civilians, particularly children and the elderly, died of hunger related illnesses. According to local commanders in the paracentral region, little advice was offered from central command as to how to surmount these challenges of protecting the civilian population.

The principal strategy of the FMLN, particularly in areas of FPL influence, was to create alternative systems of local governance designed to supply the insurgents as well as to transform the institutions that would be needed to govern in the event of an FMLN victory. The FPL established popular local governments (*Poderes Populares Locales*, or **PPLs**) early in the war as an expression of revolutionary local authority.⁴¹⁵ Although short-lived (1981-1984) due to the tremendous violence in the region, the PPL experience was significant in altering local power relations and were the foundation for subsequent governance experiments within refugee camps and repopulations.

The PPLs represented a parallel system of government where production, justice, basic services and security were organized by popular councils. Each cantón under FMLN influence set up the equivalent of municipal councils in resistance under elected leadership of a president, vice-president and secretaries in five areas (legal affairs, political education, health and education, production and trade, and self-defense).

San Vicente was divided by the FPL into five major sub-zones, within which various PPL were clustered:

1. Southern Coast – Juan Mendez
2. Volcano
3. Center (based in San Francisco Angulo)
4. Eastern highlands - Marcial Gavidia (Playon, Achiotes, Marquezado, San Bartolo Ichannmico, La Joya)
5. Northern San Vicente (San Sebastian, San Lorenzo, Santa Catarina)

Governance: The PPLs were an experiment in popular democracy within the limits of the civil war but continuing the legacy of peasant participation that had begun in the bible circles and peasant unions. It was clear to all who were interviewed that the PPLs primary function was in service of the war effort. If the FMLN achieved a military victory, the insurgent high command was expected to assume the executive offices of the national government, while the lower tier political-military leaders would become mayors.⁴¹⁶ In the

⁴¹⁵ With the exception of Pearce's (1986) oral history of the PPLs in Chalatenango in Chapter 8 of her book, information about the experience of the PPLs is scarce. This section relies on interviews with PPL officials in San Vicente. See Luciak (1987) for a critical analysis of the Nicaraguan model of rural popular democracy in the 1980s.

⁴¹⁶ Interview, Porfirio Ramos, Las Anonas, Aug. 22, 1998.

meantime, leaders were elected and major decisions were made by popular assemblies. Militias were strengthened as the first line of defense against army invasions and home-made weapons workshops were established. *Brigadistas* were trained to provide basic and emergency services to civilians and combatants and social policy was debated. According to one PPL leader:

In the fashion of the UTC, we organized mass committees, which were steps toward the formation of the Poder Popular, with a President, a Vice-President, a secretary for organizing and one for political cohesion, one for health promotion, and on and on. The responsibilities were the same as that which the current mayor of Tecoluca has now. We had a council and organization of women (Association of Salvadoran Women, AMES), and for my part I always liked to organize, and helped organize youth and children. We had a youth festival right here in the middle of the war, with prizes. The only difference was that we could not set off fireworks in order not to be detected by the enemy. All of these levels of organization was the PPL, and there three just here in San Carlos Lempa (San Carlos, Las Anonas/Conejos, and Taura/Rancho Grande). These emerged in 1982 and lasted until some time in 1985. ("Omar", San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, April 9, 1998)

Gibb refers to the PPL governance process as democratic centralism – which in practice left real power in the hands of the political-military command and military leaders (Gibb 2000: 140). The PPL experiences were uneven and debates were frequent regarding the prioritization of political versus military objectives. In practice, authentic autonomy emerged because the PPLs were often left to their own devices for resolving problems. However there was constant tension between the military demands of the war and the growing confidence of the PPLs as catalysts for social change.

In her analysis of FPL controlled zones in Chalatenango, Pearce argues that:

The PPLs were always seen by the FPL as an institution of government which would not be subject to control of the party. They were intended to be autonomous organs of the peasantry, whose emergence reflected the collapse of the political and military authority of the 'enemy', and the establishment of the power of the people. Close collaboration between the military command of the FPL and the PPLs was necessary but only to coordinate retreats and defense when the army invaded. But the situation in which the PPLs emerged did not allow for the full realization of this aim. As there was no central government to coordinate the PPLs within a wider process of social transformation, the FPL *de facto* played an orienting role and its priorities inevitably influenced the development of the PPLs (248).

Economy: Unlike the cooperative communities of San Ildefonso, producers in the PPLs were intentionally organized to produce food for the insurgency. Abandoned land was

redistributed and farmed both collectively and individually. A cooperative spirit was encouraged, but not enforced. Collective production was organized to supply the combatants, but individualistic and cooperative production occurred side by side. Harvests were frequently destroyed by the military, so food, medicine and various other supplies were also acquired through purchases from stores in the towns and by requisitioning of local landowners or commercial vehicles.

One woman who identified herself as “*gente de masa*,” or FPL base member that remained in the conflict zone the entire war and now lives in San Carlos Lempa described the risks that many women assumed to travel to the towns to transfer messages or purchase and transport needed supplies:

We would travel on the buses to the market in Zacatecoluca, buy small things, like batteries, boots, clothing, and bury them under other food in our basket. We would always carry two baskets, so if stopped at a checkpoint, we could deny knowing anything about the first. Important documents were baked in bread. We devised all sorts of ways to avoid being caught, which would have meant death. Many women died that way. (Interview, Irene, San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, Apr. 19, 1998)

At the same time, as the FMLN survived and grew stronger and more self-confident, new attitudes began to dismantle and replace the past agrarian social structure that privileged the few. Audelio Diaz, PPL President in the FPL controlled coastal region of Tecoluca, recalls:

We asked the former *colonos* of the Hacienda San Jeronimo, where the feared Chepe Diablo was now, why an “*hombre pactado*” was suddenly unwilling to confront his former peasant workforce. Slowly, fear was being transformed. (Interview, Audelio Diaz, FPL ex-combatant, mass organizer and PPL President in Jicaro Lempa and Rancho Grande, Tecoluca May and June, 1998)

An ad hoc system of progressive taxation was implemented for all commercial traffic stops where flexibility in payment was directly related to the class of driver. Diaz explained:

The local militia stopped the trucks identified by well-known brands such as Diana and ADOC. These were sacked without hesitation and the cargo was requisitioned. Poor and middle class drivers were treated differently, requisitioning only percentage of their cargo according to their wealth. Landowners as well who chose to remain in the region, collaborated by ceding land, donated income and goods as well as making purchases in the cities, all in return for not having their land confiscated. This activity was to support the compass, but the PPLs acted independently in deciding how and where to carry them out. (Interview, Audelio Diaz)

Basic Services: Special brigades were trained to provide education and health care services. Particularly for tending to wounded combatants, mobile clinics with trained medical professionals and stocked with supplies were located in the former *Hacienda Paz Opico*, among other clandestine FMLN encampments. Literacy was mixed with political training regarding the history and goals of the revolution. The PPLs also provided the means to continue the work of the popular church through activist priests accompanying the FMLN communities and through CONIP. Through the persistence of bible reflection groups, Christian values remained a central part of the insurgent principles.⁴¹⁷

Security: The base organizations also participated directly in all facets of combat, from ancillary tasks such as shuttling mail and gathering intelligence on targets or troop movements to armed facilitation of military operations and the movement of FMLN mobile forces. The base organizations were responsible for early warning and self-defense against army incursions, which including military engineering, (i.e. bunkers, ambush sites, escape and transport routes, and storage structures) as well as providing a reserve of fresh combatants and militia. Movement between revolutionary municipalities was coordinated through checkpoints with verbal passwords and symbols due to the low levels of literacy.

Justice: Dispensing local justice also relied to a great extent on the collective judgment of the PPLs. Not only did the PPLs ensure that recruits moving into positions of military responsibility had the right character, they had the power to sanction infiltrators and to intervene in cases where the FMLN had accused someone of a crime. Although far from meeting even minimal due process considerations, the mass organizations through the mechanism of the PPLs exercised collective authority over the life and death of many accused.

As significant as establishing the PPLs was the goal of destroying traditional local government in conflictive zones. U.S. architects of counter-insurgent strategy in El Salvador came to appreciate the political fallout of the death squads and that the rebels would not be easily defeated militarily, but enjoyed significant popular support. The symbolic fight slowly shifted to a contest over democratic legitimacy, which was designed to isolate both the extreme right and the insurgent left. The U.S. State Department believed that as the FMLN neared

⁴¹⁷ Interviews, Pilar Clímaco, David Rodríguez, Trinidad de Jesus Nieto, and Miriam Abrego

military victory in late 1983, “the death squads and their backers in El Salvador [and Guatemala] are enemies of democracy every bit as much as the guerrillas and their Cuban and Soviet sponsors.”⁴¹⁸

Counter-insurgent policy was designed to strengthen local democracy from the top-down, arguing that this would undermine the FMLN, whose objectives and practices Schwarz and others characterized as inherently anti-democratic. The cornerstone of this program was the re-establishment of municipal authority by constitutional reform in 1983, and the channeling of civic action projects of services and infrastructure in conflictive zones through local mayors.⁴¹⁹

After an earlier suspension of local elections in El Salvador they resumed in 1952, although candidates were often pre-selected by party elites or the military.⁴²⁰ The municipal council, which consists of a mayor, between 4 and 12 *regidores* (aldermen), and a *sindico* (auditor, or legal representative of the municipality), is elected by a closed list winner take all format.⁴²¹ Voters actually choose from a ballot where slates are indicated by the party name, symbol and colors.

Beyond policing functions for the local landed elite, rural municipal government was little more than a ceremonial institution. Restoring mayoral legitimacy meant re-inventing it. Under the provisional government between 1979 and the 1985 municipal elections, mayors were simply appointed and there was significant turnover. The Christian Democrats passed several laws intended to restore municipal autonomy, increase state transfers and establish a municipal training institute.⁴²² The 1986 reform of the municipal code transferred 28 functions,

⁴¹⁸ Quoting Deputy Secretary of State, Kenneth W. Dam, in Rivard (1983: 57).

⁴¹⁹ The new constitution also gutted Phase II of the land reform by raising the legal reserve limit to 245 hectares, virtually assuring the it would never be implemented.

⁴²⁰ Appointment of municipal officials was reinstated by the Martínez dictatorship in 1932, before which local elections existed.

⁴²¹ Parties winning a plurality are elected to all town council seats for a term of three years. Re-election is permitted. Non-proportional winner-take-all local elections in multi-member districts are quite rare in Latin America

⁴²² Prior to the 1983 constitutional reform, departmental governors intervened in many municipal functions. The countries 262 municipalities were divided into 39 districts, where an assistant governor closely supervised local decisions and had the power to impose fines. Districts were abolished and the powers of departmental governors over local government were ended with the constitutional reform, and municipal autonomy was codified in 1986.

by one estimate, to local government.⁴²³ However, in many of these the central government exercises veto power. Revision of tax policy, for example, requires legislative approval.

The only administrative funds were stamps sold for issuing documents, irregular local taxes, fees for a variety of services that were frequently suspended by the conflict, a derisory state transfer, projects financed by the National Commission for the Restoration of Areas (CONARA) – the government’s principal counter-insurgency program, or the Ministry of Interior (DIDECO) and finally, NGO relief donations. Rural mayors were given little support and even less protection, fulfilling their duties out of a sense of civic responsibility. Coming after decades of “demunicipalization,” where local governments were neglected or local functions were recentralized, lack of substantive progress following these reforms is unsurprising.⁴²⁴

In San Ildefonso, Cesar López received his appointment notification as mayor in December 1979 by telegram. While he cited as one of his achievements the improvement of the road that passed in front of his house, Lopez tired of the job and turned over responsibilities to one of the councilmen, who in turn passed duties over to López’ wife, Rosaminta from 1982-1985. As middle class medium landowning residents of the town center, Cesar and Rosaminta were prototypical mayors for a rural municipality. The October 1979 coup deposed many of the PCN local authorities that had controlled the municipal council, and who also happened to come from the principal landowning families in places like San Ildefonso and Guadalupe.⁴²⁵ The provisional government appointments, at the very least, opened up local governance to individuals who were not necessarily at the center of the local power structure. Cesar was the

⁴²³ Nickson (1990: 179). These responsibilities were dominated by basic services: solid waste management, public lighting, regulation of markets, slaughterhouses and cemeteries, and civil registration.

⁴²⁴ Op cit, pp. 16-19

⁴²⁵ PCN Decree 198: Substitution of Members of the Municipal Council in Various Departments of the Republic, Jan. 28, 1961, issued after the military overthrow of the reformist Lemus government in 1961, identifies the landowning family nexus among the local elites appointed to municipal posts. In both San Ildefonso and Guadalupe, we see the coincidence between locally dominant landowning elites, clergy and local governance. In San Ildefonso, the mayor was Don Eusebio Antonio Marín, First alderman: Don Gilberto Domingo Amaya, Second alderman: Don Fredy Amaya, Síndico: Don José Adrián Gavidia, and Alternates: Don Dolores Romero and Don Manuel de Jesús Ruiz. In Guadalupe, the mayor was Don Odilón Rigoberto Platero, First alderman: Don José Pablo Adalberto Pineda, Second alderman: Don Roberto Torres, Síndico: Don Jesús Pío Chávez, and Alternates: Don Jesús Monge & Don Francisco Platero Valladares.

foreman for a nearby cattle hacienda that was being bled by FMLN taxes and eventually sold to FINATA. His wife managed a cheese processing and delivery business out their home.

Rosaminta described how the part of the mayor's office was destroyed in one of the early FMLN attacks on the town and a war tax of 5,000 and 10,000 colones (\$1,250 - \$2,500) was paid periodically to the insurgents. She was also forced to turn over the stamps, typewriters and forms, but refused to destroy the birth, death, marriage and sales records in overt defiance of rebel demands. For these discretions, she faced death threats from the local military and survived only through an intervention by her son-in-law who was colonel at the time.⁴²⁶ The Lopez' sent their children to the U.S., their house was damaged by aerial bombing, and their cattle were requisitioned. However personal and official collaboration with the FMLN was the perceived cost of serving as mayor.⁴²⁷

In Verapáz, Mauricio Alfaro, the appointed mayor between (1979-1985), characterized a typical PDC supporter at the time. His family owned a small store and ten hectares of sugar cane. He identified with the electoral opposition in their disgust with the past political abuses of the PCN. However, armed struggle was never an option. He described his perspective as one of a critical but neutral observer – which he illustrated by holding out his arms to appear like a fulcrum of the scales of justice with the opposing extremes hanging as weights on either side.

During Alfaro's term, the municipal building was burned and the health clinic was destroyed. Alfaro complained that government projects (DIDECO) only used the municipal government as a pass through and to organize donated labor, while the funds were administered by the Ministry of Interior. Eight tons of U.S. food aid arrived monthly in the early 1980s to be distributed to the displaced population. The municipal office was destroyed by the FMLN and a brother-in-law was assassinated. But when advised to seek asylum in the U.S. he refused. Seeing his role as almost a puppet and wanting to dedicate more attention to his farm, Alfaro attempted to resign on three occasions, but was forced to continue until 1985.

The examples of San Ildefonso and Verapáz point to the challenges facing mayors during the war's early years. However, the levels of collaboration and FMLN strength varied,

⁴²⁶ Interview, Maria Zoila Rivas de Zelaya, Municipal Secretary, May 22, 1998 San Ildefonso.

⁴²⁷ Interviews, Carlos and Rosaminta Lopez, former mayors of San Ildefonso, May 26, 1998.

resulting in distinct treatment of mayors in different regions. Eleazar Cruz Iraheta, ARENA mayor of San Cayetano Istepeque, was assassinated by the FPL on April 3, 1983. Pyes (1983) estimates that 35 PDC mayors were killed between 1980-1983, most at the hands of ORDEN.

In sum, mayors were thrust into duty during the early years of the war with little authority or resources. For the most part, they served as channels for improvised relief projects with little local coordination nor an overarching plan from the central government. Those mayors that seemed to manage well did so through passive collaboration with the FMLN.

4. FMLN Coordination and Military Stalemate

The FMLN recovered and eventually reached military parity with government forces. After the first coordinated attacks were carried out during the Jan 1981 offensive, the next two years were mostly independent operations by the five factions of the FMLN. In zones of FMLN control, by late 1982 most of the National Guard posts had been destroyed and attacks involving concentrations of thousands of combatants were increasingly effective and embarrassing the government. Soldiers surrendered quickly and civil defense units were called on to put up the toughest resistance.

While the FMLN took the towns of the Jiboa Valley on various occasions they failed to clear the military control of this side of the volcano. Particularly resistant areas included the cantón of San Emigdio of Guadalupe and Candelaria Lempa, both of which bordered Cristiani's coffee finca which housed its own detachment of soldiers. At a time when FPL forces were neutralizing entire companies of soldiers, the coffee producing village of San Emigdio fended off numerous attacks even by FPL Special Forces. Unlike the teenage soldiers who collapsed quickly under fire, the civil defense patrollers in San Emigdio were 40 to 50 year old smallholders who were fighting to defend what little security they had preserved. An FPL commander also attributed the tremendous resistance in San Emigdio to a deeply rooted conservative and anti-communist Catholic faith:

In the heat of a battle to take San Emigdio, our forces could hear the civil patrollers in near rapture singing religious verses and appealing for God's justice to guide their defense of the town. Their resistance was so tenacious and profoundly motivated by these religious appeals that it began to sew

doubt among some of the FMLN combatants that God may not actually be siding with the insurgency. This religious zeal was one of the reasons our forces failed to take and hold San Emigdio. (Interview, Pablo Parada Andino, May 4, 1998)

By the end of 1982, the constant repression and the influx of better equipment swelled the rebel ranks to approximately 2,500 fighters in the province alone.⁴²⁸ The militia were receiving equipment and began to play more central roles in military operations. The FMLN dealt the military a steady string of black eyes. Combatants described with an air of invincibility how FMLN battalions were capable of destroying the most formidable U.S. designed fortifications on the *Chinchontepec* volcano, taking 95 soldiers prisoner in the assault on the military garrison at *Siete Joyas*, in May, 1983.⁴²⁹ Another entire battalion, El Nonualco, totaling some 300 soldiers, was destroyed in a battle at *El Salto*.⁴³⁰ High ranking U.S. military officials raised the probability of an insurgent victory unless dramatic changes were made.

The level of self-confidence and independence among FMLN field commanders also contributed to excesses that suggested an imbalance in the strategic mix of politics and militarism. In June of 1983, an FPL battalion under the command of Mayo Sibrián ambushed a company of government soldiers in a village below San Ildefonso called Quebrada Seca. Some 42 soldiers killed in the battle, but an additional thirty surrendered. Of these, at least 15 were executed after being taken prisoner. An FMLN political officer attempted to intervene to stop the killing but was only able ensure the escape of an officer and another soldier (Gibb 2000: 185-186). This action ensured that the massacre would be reported. News of the massacre was damaging to the FMLN's principled discourse and indicative of the risks of a rather decentralized strategy up to that point. One combatant involved in the incident spoke openly about the level of ruthlessness under Mayo's command for which his battalion was becoming notorious. He referred to Quebrada Seca as evidence of the imbalance that had emerged between the rapidly increasing military capacity of FMLN and the almost spontaneous episodes

⁴²⁸ Gibb (2000: 177). PRTC estimates indicate that as few as 150 armed combatants remained in Northern SV by late 1982, not nearly enough to protect thousands of civilians. Interview, Chaca, PRTC commander.

⁴²⁹ Interviews, Nicolás García; Alejandro Valladares, and Pablo Parada Andino. Nearly 100 soldiers were reportedly killed, wounded or captured in this operation. An overarching concern that motivated the FMLN strategy of military superiority during the early 1980s was not only in reaction to the perceived weaknesses of government forces, but also to prepare for what was then considered an inevitable invasion by U.S. forces.

⁴³⁰ Accounts estimate 45 prisoners, but the majority was killed.

of vengeance that were effectively eliminating any moral distinctions between the Salvadoran army and themselves.⁴³¹ However, the Quebrada Seca killings also signaled a much more delicate internal crisis that had emerged under the command of Mayo Sibrián and would eventually illustrate the downside of trust in the FMLN commanders on which the insurgency depended.⁴³²

Still, most of the military activity in the region was not well coordinated and the goal of military superiority began to outpace the political work. Competition between the five rebel organizations explained the missed opportunity for insurrection in March 1980. By the mid 1980s, deepened competition for authority within the FMLN and for recruits and arms contributed to turf battles and poor coordination that often resulted in friendly fire deaths. Toward the later years of the war, these same competitive motivations would lead to the establishment of five parallel networks of solidarity organizations for both strategic on the ground services and fundraising in the exterior.

In one such instance, an FPL combatant describes the tensions that impeded political and military coordination in the region:

Our unit had planned an attack on the ATONAL Battalion for weeks near Santa Clara in Usulután, alerting the RN units in the region to avoid confusion. During the battle, in which the FPL inflicted heavy losses, RN troops crossed into the line of fire. Both insurgent squads knew to some degree that the other was not the enemy, but the RN didn't indicate or respond. Combatants in both groups were killed by friendly fire. However, after the battle, the FPL Battalion moved to surround the RN encampment in order to demand the return of six rifles capture in combat from six wounded FPL fighters that in fact still belonged to the FPL (with serial numbers to prove it). The threat of violence was necessary to recover the arms. In this early expansion period of the war, without strict coordination between the revolutionary armies, there were numerous losses to friendly fire.⁴³³

⁴³¹ Interview, Carlos Cortés, Feb. 3, 1999, La Sabana, Tecoluca. Quebrada Seca was the extreme at that point in the war, but only one of numerous incidents of revenge killing of prisoners or excessive violence in combat. An internal evaluation after Quebrada Seca stressed efforts needed to correct the lack of attention to the political dimension of the war, but it is not clear whether any sanctions were imposed.

⁴³² Sibrián was a member of the FMLN high command for the eastern front "Francisco Sanchez," in 1981 and commanded the operation that destroyed the first of two bridges that connect the eastern and western halves of the country in December of that year. See Benítez-Manaut (1989: 264).

⁴³³ Interview, Carlos Cortés Hernández, La Sabana, Tecoluca, Jan. 22, 1999

The FPL had the largest army and led the joint command in the paracentral region, allying with the PRTC in the north of San Vicente, RN forces operating in eastern Usulután and a small Communist Party (FAL) contingent operated from a base on the *Chinchontepec* volcano. ERP forces dominated the north-south corridor from Jucuarán to northern San Miguel-Morazán. Each military organization operated according to a different political philosophy and different military capabilities. The philosophy of prolonged popular war espoused by the FPL's legendary and most intransigent leader, Salvador Cayetano Carpio (Marcial), made it least open to cooperation with other groups.

However an internal crisis within the FPL and a shift in the political and military tactics of the Salvadoran government resulted in the FMLN altering its own tactics. In a power struggle, on April 6, 1983, Marcial ordered the execution of the FPL second in command, then killed himself. The crisis came at perhaps the apex of FMLN military effectiveness, which may have mitigated the psychological damage of the loss of the top two FPL commanders. Yet it also removed a major obstacle to greater integration of the FMLN as a political – military force. With the FPL in disarray at the central command level, steps were taken to establish unity within the central command and harmonize tactics through intentional cooperation on the ground.

However, greater unification and harmonization of command and operations had already been occurring on the ground by necessity in reaction to a more effective military strategy of aerial bombardment and troop placement. This more aggressive military strategy was combined with the introduction of civilian pacification programs and cushioned as well by the growing government legitimacy following the electoral victory of Duarte as President in 1984. The massive buildup of the Salvadoran air force effectively eliminated the decisive FMLN advantage to rapidly concentrate forces. Aerial bombing raids were stepped up to remove the civilian population that remained in FMLN control zones, followed by efforts to win the allegiance of those choosing to stay through public works and social service provision (Corum 1998).

Colonel Waghelstein, then head of the U.S. military training group in El Salvador, argued that this new tactic of civic action programs should be viewed as a “War on the Crowd - the type of war in which the civilian population, or more precisely the support of the population, was the objective,” (1985: 119) The CONARA initiative was launched in June

1983 in San Vicente and Usulután. The paracentral region was selected to pilot the civic action programs, according to U.S. State Department, “because of its economic importance (cotton, sugar, coffee) its central position, its function as the highway, electric and communications link to the Eastern portion and its heavy concentration of displaced persons...If successful, it would quietly militarize civilian life within the model provinces, ensuring government control without the constant presence of the armed forces.”

With *Operation Well-being for San Vicente*, the Salvadoran army launched its largest concerted counter-insurgency operation of the war, intended to remove the FPL and co-opt its support from the *Chinchontepec* volcano. After about a month of steady bombing, some 6,000 troops moved in to occupy most of the volcano and parts of the coast in Tecoluca. The FPL was forced to relocate several thousand people first to Usulután then back to the north of San Vicente to avoid the army. In some contrast to the recent military policy of indiscriminate violence, the operation was designed to create a space for CONARA to provide emergency services for the displaced population, rebuild roads and houses, with the hopes to resettle sympathetic civilians in areas that could then be policed by civil defense units. The Salvadoran Territorial Services admitted that civil defense patrols were not actually defending themselves but served essentially as human antennas and buffers for the Army by attracting attacks by the enemy (Lawyers Committee on Human Rights 1984; Miles 1984; Siegel and Hackel 1988).

In San Vicente, the CONARA strategy had little effect and in fact illustrated the level of sophistication that FMLN coordination with mass organizations had achieved. Before Operation Well-Being for San Vicente was underway, the FPL withdrew its combatants to Usulután, directed an offensive against key towns there and stepped up attacks from bases in Chalatenango. Instead of trying to block the civic action program, the FMLN organized communities showed a neutral civilian identity and simply gathered to accept the humanitarian supplies, much of which were then diverted to the insurgency.⁴³⁴

The plan Operation Well-Being for San Vicente failed to lower the general distrust that most peasant communities held for the military, which was visibly in charge of and skimmed funds from CONARA. For civilians aligned with the FMLN this practice of *poder de doble*

⁴³⁴ An unpublished ERP document written in 1987 indicates that that this strategy “two-face power”, was a crucial aspect of re-establishing civilian bases of support throughout the war. ‘*El poder de doble cara*’ Lilian Mercedes Letona (Comandante Luisa), internal FMLN manuscript, Morazán, 1987.

cara (two-faced power) evolved as both a means for survival and an explicit strategy for revolutionary organization. This practice of two-faced power was an extension of the PPL strategy in which rebel fighters depended upon the support of hundreds and even thousands of *masas*. Ultimately, the armed forces were forced to reallocate troops to Usulután and just months after the end of the program, the FPL and its base were operating normally on the volcano.

The CONARA debut was considered a failure as far as its short term goal of altering peasant sympathies on the volcano. By August of 1983, the FPL again massing its forces with other elements of the FMLN with spectacular success.

CONARA and its various reincarnations during the war would not be very effective in winning peasant sympathies or reversing distrust toward the military. Nevertheless, it was expanded to have a presence in all departments by the 1987, although its programs were limited to urban areas and cantones in areas where FMLN influence was weak, but also where political sympathies were strongest. An Armed Forces document projecting the areas for consolidation of the CONARA pacification program, under the new name United for Reconstruction, targeted the Jiboa Valley in San Vicente as the highest priority. Tecoluca was too insecure and San Ildefonso was of lower strategic importance.⁴³⁵

Despite CONARA's explicit association with the military objectives and the highly centralized allocation of resources, these projects were about the only development resources available in most rural conflictive communities. Particularly in small urban centers that were struggling to provide basic services to hundreds of families that had been displaced from rural conflictive zones, CONARA assistance was critical, if only symbolic in any development sense.

In San Ildefonso and other conflictive areas where government control was not as tenuous, the impact of CONARA was substantial. According to one local construction supervisor, CONARA funded one room schools in many of the lowland (less conflictive)

⁴³⁵ FAES (1986) - General Adolfo O. Blandon, Chief of Salvadoran Armed Forces High Command, Operational Plan No. 1 of the United to Reconstruct Campaign - Areas of Consolidation by Department, internal document, (1986) mimeo. In neighboring La Paz target areas included Hacienda Santa Teresa, Santiago Nonualco, San José Obrajuelo, Platanares, El Callejón, Piedra Grande Arriba, Santa Lucia, Las Animas, Tehuiste Arriba. In Usulután, target areas included the cascos of Ozatlán, Jiquilisco, Puerto El Triunfo, San Dionisio, Concepción Baitres, Santa Elena and the cantón of Los Campos.

villages and urban road improvements under Duarte. Local labor was paid six colones per day (\$1.25).⁴³⁶ Local claims of corruption were indicative of larger problems that CONARA faced at the national level under Christian Democrat administration.

Perhaps the determining factor for the FMLN in this period was the narrow election victory of Duarte over ARENA founder, Roberto D'Aubuisson, in the 1984 presidential elections. Fair or not, the transfer of power to a civilian government conveyed significant legitimacy away from the rationale for armed struggle and in turn stole energy from any hope for a popular insurrection.

The confluence of all of these shifts forced the FPL in the paracentral region to contemplate dismantling the PPLs, evacuating the mass organizations and for the entire FMLN to shift back to guerrilla war strategy. The later paper on *doble cara* strategy recognizes that, "the FMLN in openly declaring its relationship with these people, made them illegal, which put them into confrontation with the enemy. But the masses were unarmed, and so only had options of running or hiding, which in turn made them even more illegal." Miles and Ostertag (1991) argue the PPLs had become a burden on the FPL as the air war reduced the tactical advantage of large concentrated forces. "As civilian governing bodies, the PPLs were intended as an open, formal expression of dual power in the rural areas where the Armed Forces had lost permanent control. But the participatory characteristics of this form of organizing exacerbated many of the difficulties the revolutionary movement was facing" (23).

Unlike the PPL experiences described by Pearce in Chalatenango, the PPL strategy was short-lived in the paracentral zone (Pearce 1986). The brutality of the repression reflected by the wave of above noted massacres forced constant mobilizations of thousands of people and eventually the depopulation of most of Tecoluca and northern San Vicente. After the August 1982 Calabozo massacre in Amatitan Arriba, about 20 km to the west of San Ildefonso, all of the FMLN organizations began withdrawing their civilian base from northern San Vicente to refugee camps to Zaragoza, La Libertad, San Miguel and ultimately, San Antonio, just across the border in Honduras.

Demonstrating reluctance to abandon the initial strategy of maintaining a civilian presence in the zone, the FPL initiated a one year campaign beginning in late 1983 to prepare

⁴³⁶ Interview Santiago Melendez, May 23, 1998, San Ildefonso.

the strategic withdrawal of its own mass organizations. This involved explaining the rationale to the PPLs and setting up the logistics channels that would facilitate safe passage. Against the wishes of many who preferred remaining in the region, in 1984 the FPL began the controlled relocation of its mass organizations to Mesa Grande refuge in Honduras, as well as various urban centers.⁴³⁷ The depopulation of much of the FMLN control zones in the paracentral region forced two contradictory effects, a centralization of the FMLN command structure but an even greater decentralization of the on the ground military operations that would characterize a return to guerrilla tactics.

5. Competing Hierarchies: Insurgent and Counter-insurgent experiences

Insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies appealed to and in turn, shaped attitudes and behaviors in their respective areas of control. In this section, I examine more closely these respective political experiences during the high intensity phase of the conflict.

El Salvador is small, densely populated, and in turn, geographically inhospitable to armed insurrection. The FMLN boasted that the people served as the mountains that the insurgency lacked. In the early years of the war, survival of the insurgency depended on achieving a high level of trust with the civilian population. Many combatants, as suggested in the survey data, were motivated to join by the popular grievances shared by many rural poor. However, instruction as combatants reinforced and honed this discontent into the values and discipline that a successful guerrilla war would require. FMLN discipline also required the imposition of a military code by the political and operational officers.

The FPL was selective in its early recruitment. Ascendancy within the FMLN involved a succession of steps, beginning with participation in the PPLs:

First were the *poderes populares locales*, which were involved mostly in agriculture work and requisition. The PPLs, like BPR in the 1970s, were connected to the FPL structure by mass organizers that were

⁴³⁷ The principal refuge centers were Calle Real, San Salvador; Domo Maria in Mejicanos, and several villages in Usulután.

charged with accompanying the masses. From there one passed to the ranks of guerrilla militia, and then to the army of popular liberation (EPL). Later on, Special Forces battalions were formed.⁴³⁸

Veterans described a meticulous screening process where aspirants would be evaluated in all areas of their behavior and attitudes. These ranged from eliminating basic vices to developing more subtle skills like the capacity to cultivate the self-confidence of the civilian population. FPL training, according to one veteran, was as much about military tactics as it was about the ground rules and sensitivity for engaging the civilian population:

To begin with, when one began, there were twenty-six guidelines, of which you had to fulfill at least half to be accepted before taking on any responsibility. If you had fulfilled less than 50%, you weren't given the opportunity, and were told, "Look, we're sorry but it's necessary for you to work a little harder on the negative parts, which count more in your personality, your conduct and all that allows you to be an example for the organization among the people. For example, to give you some idea, in the context of personal habits, first, you had to be someone that didn't drink too much, or that didn't interact poorly with one's comrades or neighbors, or people. It involved knowing how to first listen to the people and after listening to them and analyzing what they said to provide them answers that were appropriate but not in a drastic or negative way, but to take into consideration the opinion that had been given. It meant, at the least, not taking opportunities with women. One shouldn't dedicate oneself to the profit of the organization itself, or misuse funds, and not mislead in any way the organization, yourself or other people. These are some of the positive rules that a person had to follow. If of the 26 guidelines, the negatives weighed the most heavily, they sent you back to be educated with the rest. But if at least half of them were fulfilled positively, you were told, 'we accept you and expect you to take into account those other areas that need improvement.'⁴³⁹

Combatants described the emphasis in FMLN political training on the so-called fifteen principles of combat, the most fundamental of which was not to dehumanize the war.⁴⁴⁰ Solidarity with the poor, self-sacrifice, and equality were all part of the perceived *mística* of the

⁴³⁸ Carlos Urbina, ex FPL combatant, La Florida, Aug. 25, 1998. The structure of the EPL went from squads of 5-10 combatants, *peletones* of 15-30, sections of 45-90, detachments of 135-270, and battalions, which ranged from 405-810.

⁴³⁹ Interview, Alvaro Alfaro, ex –combatant for the FPL and cooperative leader in, San Bartolo, Tecoluca, April 23, 1998. Alfaro died of a cerebral hemorrhage days after assisting in the October, 1998 evacuation following Hurricane Mitch. "Que supiera entender, escuchar primero a la gente y después de escucharles y analizar y darles una respuesta si la tenía que dar pero no era que diera respuestas drásticas negativas, sino que tomara en cuenta la opinión de lo que le habían aportado."

⁴⁴⁰ Interview, Norberto Contreras. The exact number of rules or principles differed in combatant testimony.

FMLN and acts that damaged this reputation were treated as serious offenses in order to reinforce a sense of internal discipline and trust.⁴⁴¹ Revolutionary justice went hand in hand with principled voluntarism for instilling the rules of engagement in the early years of the war. Acts of pilfering, extortion, vandalism, accumulation of luxury items – all of which induced a perception of inequality and sowed resentment, were punishable offenses. Although these were lower grade crimes, typically drawing double or triple duties for first time offenders and expulsion or execution for severe offenders. Rape, the murder of another combatant, repeated abandonment of a weapon, or giving information to the enemy were all punishable by death:

What did acceptance into the ranks of the revolution mean? In the first place, being accepted had three phases. The first phase was sympathizer, or someone that aspired to be a member of the organization. Then this advanced more by becoming a member. The new member, this was the most watched over, the most controlled phase, because he had to walk a straight line (*con los pies rectos*). Any slip up would bring harm to him, and punishment – a mountain of corrective measures to prevent him from giving a bad example. Various comrades had to be punished because they disobeyed and were a bad example. If the people recognized or found out that this member or aspirant of the organization ran around doing these things, they might think that these behaviors are what the FMLN is all about. For example, the rape of a woman, for this the death penalty was applied because confusing force with voluntarism brought discredit on the organization, a situation that was not tolerated by the organization's principles. Abandonment of one's weapon – if a guerilla abandoned their weapon, this brought a correspondingly severe penalty, or if this had happened on two or three prior occasions, the death penalty was applied as a military law. Then, misuse of fund in those periods when I worked within some organizations [that handled money] this was also serious, and could result in a death penalty. These were the three most relevant ones. (Interview Alvaro Alfaro, San Bartolo, Tecoluca)

Most offenses were dispensed with after collective discussions among fellow combatants. When crimes involved civilians, popular local government (PPL) assemblies were called where testimony could be offered on behalf or against the accused. After open discussion, a political decision would be reached by tribunal.⁴⁴² In sum, the FMLN was capable of reinforcing the desired internal values and beliefs through the effective monitoring and capacity to sanction compliance with what most considered a fair set of rules.

The insurgent rules of engagement also had a significant external component. One example was the policy of releasing prisoners. Having no prisoners for which to trade in the

⁴⁴¹ Interviews with various combatants

⁴⁴² In the cases of PPLs that I researched, the tribunal consisted of the PPL government.

early years of the war, FMLN policy was to release captured soldiers with the exception of those who were found to be active in death squads or as spies. Those determined to be a future risk were executed. FMLN combatants had to determine whether the soldier had fought aggressively or not, typically evident by the number of unspent bullets remaining in the cartridge or tone of voice. Most captives were released conditional upon future collaboration. Civilian informants were often given similar ultimatums before more decisive retaliation was taken. Despite effective sanction mechanisms, it was a constant struggle to mitigate the deep desire for revenge, which led in some instances to vigilante justice.⁴⁴³

Another central theme in combatant instruction involved the de-emphasis on material incentives as a motivation to fight. Most, although not all, joined the revolutionary movement as extremely poor people. Nevertheless, most asserted that they were not fighting for the money. Post-war conditions among the demobilized seem to validate these claims. Indeed, few were permitted to carry or accumulate money during the war and others described their discomfort with responsibilities involving money due to the risks associated with its misuse.

To cite one instance, a combatant describes the looting of a local bank:

Combatants were not to carry large sums of money, and was not even necessary because meals and other material needs were provided for collectively or not at all. There were small exceptions, as in the case of family visits. But handling money was considered nothing more than the potential for crimes, although it would have been difficult to spend as a combatant anyway. I led a bank robbery after taking the city of Berlin in February 1983. It was not the risks associated with the military side of the operation that worried me most, but the responsibility in holding the money until it could be turned over.

The man had seen years of combat and had lost an arm in the first attack on Tecoluca during the 1981 offensive. Still, it was the responsibility of holding the money until it could be turned over to the high command that weighed most in his assessment of the operational risks. He personally transported \$160,000 to designated contacts and took great pride in the fact that every cent made it safely.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ Interviews, FMLN officers, Carlos Cortes, Audelio Díaz, Pablo Parada Andino, Chaca.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview, Audelio Diaz, bank robbery was confirmed in a news report in *La Prensa Grafica*, Feb. 1983.

Building trust among the civilian population was paramount given both the security prerequisites as well as the vast and diverse mobilization network employed by the FMLN to conduct the war. Building trust involved breaking down an anti-communist ideology that had deeply penetrated the collective consciousness of much of the rural population. To overcome these misconceptions, the FMLN adopted a policy of defending its policies publicly with the civilian population, even to the point of encouraging complaints if people believed that they were treated unfairly. The expropriation of private property among passive collaborators and the destruction of property of active opponents or those who refused to collaborate, were not disputable. However there were limits to both types of actions and the FMLN through its communications capacity devolved some authority to the civilian population in setting these limits. Injustices committed by FMLN combatants could be denounced to the zone commander and in some cases, adjudicated.

Benjamín Molina, a medium sized sugar grower with several sugar mills living in Verapáz was kidnapped by the FMLN early in 1986. He recognized his kidnappers as former laborers at his mill from local families. They had demanded and, Molina contended, won wage concessions in the run-up to the war. Molina considered himself *un buen patrono*. His family paid the ransom and he was released. Several weeks later, the local FMLN commander visited Molina to verify details of the kidnapping. Apparently, the kidnappers had kept some or all of the ransom. Soon after the commander reported to Molina that the squad charged with the kidnapping had been “*ajusticiado*”, or executed.⁴⁴⁵ Accountability was a strategic priority of the insurgency, even to the population considered adversarial to the tactics of the FMLN.

One zone commander reflected that despite the various reasons for joining the FMLN, whether it was the pursuit of a girlfriend, to seek refuge from the repression, or simply ideological commitments, once in, each person was obliged to a moral rectitude that distinguished the FMLN from the armed forces. In part, this was because trust was so fundamental to the FMLN effectiveness in its mission. Unprincipled recruits (*gente prepotente*) who joined primarily out of a need for revenge, were viewed with caution because they often failed to fulfill their specific responsibilities in an operation.⁴⁴⁶ Another combatant

⁴⁴⁵ Interview, Benjamín Mejía, Verapáz. Benjamin Molina was kidnapped for a ransom of \$12,000, and robbed (taxed) on another occasion for \$1,500.

⁴⁴⁶ Interview, Pablo Parada Andino, sub-zone commander for San Vicente in the early 1980s.

estimated that only 10% joined the FMLN for unprincipled motives (voyeurism, personal disputes) but that they did not last. Most knew that only through experience would a trustworthy combatant be proven.⁴⁴⁷

For a period during the early years of the war, care was taken to plan each of the major operations, which were preceded by political discussions to assess and debate the merits of the overall mission and role each individual would play. Actions were not taken in haste, but only after sufficient training and preparation would assure that all tasks would be carried out.⁴⁴⁸ The disadvantages of guerrilla warfare meant that operations involved many synchronized but decentralized actions, by combatants and civilians alike that required a high level of internal and external trust. Among the participating combatants, the success of a deliberate and planned operation left one with a profound sense of mission and a commitment to sacrifice for others.

The FMLN argued that their efforts would transform themselves and in turn Salvadoran society, which had been corrupted by structural injustices. This struggle for “self-transformation,” to produce the “new revolutionary man” as Che Guevara had argued, melded evenly with the liberation theology foundations of the insurgency to reinforce a spiritual mentality for building a revolutionary socialist conscience (Guevara 1966a: 21, 1966b: 13; Liss 1984: 256-265). The influence of Guevara is evident in the moral incentive structure upon which the FMLN achieved the extraordinary revolutionary discipline that made the guerrillas such an effective fighting force for so many years. The successful guerrilla combatant, according this thinking, required:

the ability to fight all night with only twenty bullets, to have the patience to wait until the right moment to fire during an ambush, or to make the right decision judging another comrade’s error.⁴⁴⁹

In his analysis of the rise and fall of social movements, Tarrow is skeptical about just how much a rebellion can change the underlying culture. “When the dust of revolution settles,

⁴⁴⁷ Interview, Audelio Diaz, April 26, 1998

⁴⁴⁸ The intensification of the air war by 1983 reduced the space for regular discussion of operations and strategy, both within the FMLN and within most PPLs in the paracentral region.

⁴⁴⁹ Audelio Diaz, Apr 26, 1998.

the culture of consensus is often more enduring than the costume of revolt” (Tarrow 1994: 118). An FMLN commander operating in northern San Vicente offered a similar reflection:

The circumstances of the war called forth a set of values, a fraternal solidarity that was authentic and necessary, not so much as a new culture but as a form of survival. The differences are therefore more apparent between older and younger combatants. Those who joined at the beginning experienced many “final offensives” and had to overcome an accumulation of deception and self-deception to assimilate.
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This “self-deception” refers to the daunting challenges that doom the majority of peasant rebellions to fail and quickly diminish the romanticism of choosing insurgency. Like others who served “*punto a punto*,” or from the beginning to the end of the conflict, survival involved a philosophical reconciliation that the sacrifices were unlikely to be compensated in the short term. Revolutionary ideals would not necessarily perfect a messy reality, humanization of war was at best a rhetorical contradiction.

It is worth adding that these same bedrock attitudes of discipline, trust and high levels of self-confidence in the historical justness of their cause all posed a potential risk for the FMLN. Efficacy can be vulnerable to an unquestioning overconfidence and idolatry. The reliance on trust increased FMLN susceptibility to uncritical acceptance of military leadership, and this became especially difficult when success on the battlefield conflicted with the violation of those values that most were fighting to universalize. This problem was particularly acute when trust was betrayed by infiltrators and decisions regarding executions or expulsions were taken by the leadership alone to cleanse the organization. *Caciquismo* and over-dependence on military leadership, in the eyes of some combatants, tended to perpetuate the pre-war culture by simply replacing the unquestioned authority of the landed elites rather than transforming it.

a. The formation of a counter-insurgent political culture

⁴⁵⁰ Interview, (Chaca) PRTC commander, N. San Vicente.

Compared with the FMLN testimony, far less has been written about the rationale or values associated with participation in the counter-insurgency. In part, this may be due to the observed reticence to speak openly about the war in general in these regions or to justify the actions taken by groups often characterized as death squads. To be sure, these paramilitary organizations found sufficient support in certain regions such as the Jiboa Valley, to leave little doubt regarding the loyalties of at least a segment of the population.⁴⁵¹ At the same time, many of the smaller landowners, some of whom had been kidnapped or ceded land in the agrarian reform, expressed comprehension and even sympathy for the FMLN goals, despite their own hardships. Within the Jiboa Valley, these local elites represented a PDC base prior to the mid-1980s and would have favored the gradual, stable democratic transition augured by Duarte Presidency in the 1970s. However, the rapid ascent of the ARENA party during the 1980s, resting upon indiscriminate violence and the psychological demonization of all political opposition effectively marginalized these moderate voices and found a particular appeal among the poorest households in the countryside.

Most served in the civil defenses reluctantly, out of fear of reprisal by the local military authority. This stated ambivalence toward civil defense service was due in part to preferred avoidance of all conflict. But in the Jiboa Valley, most simply complained that civil defense service was not compensated and too risky due to the lack of proper equipment. U.S. advisors observed that peasants avoided civil patrol duty because they considered these groups as “ugly symbols of uncontrolled repression,” rather than providing security (Schwartz 1991: 52). An effective civil defense was not achieved, according to Schwartz, because of their perception as mercenaries for the rich, the lack of official military support, and the lack of compensation. U.S advisors concluded, “In many areas where civil defense units have been formed, those units are armed instruments of the local power structure rather than democratic instruments for community protection” (Schwarz 1991: 54-55). This loyalty to local landowners and defense of their own parcels was possibly seen as a positive motivation by many civil defense volunteers.

⁴⁵¹ However, in my interviews only in FMLN controlled towns were death squad leaders, living and dead, named.

Few ex-soldiers of civil patrollers spoke with any enthusiasm or detail about the principled motivations behind their decision to join. Conscription proved to be a far more salient rationale for military service, although it represented the antithesis of any selective criteria in shaping the political sensibilities of the rank and file fighter. Demobilized soldiers spoke less of values or patriotism, than of duty or simply of years of service. There is resentment, particularly among the uncompensated civil patrols, at the perceived benefits that the FMLN combatants have received. Some ex-soldiers attribute their actions to positive changes in the political system. However, most emphasize the negative economic costs of the war, to themselves and in general.

In Guadalupe during the war until his death, Padre Platero rallied the civil defense forces into service, calling upon the wives of the male patrollers to be prepared to serve, “with *cuma* or club,” in replacement of their husband should he be killed. Platero prophesized the war, or “*cataclismo*,” in apocalyptic terms challenging parishioners to fulfill their faith in God’s plan by their unquestioning defense of their town from the violence that they would face.⁴⁵²

Similarly, Bishop Aparicio increasingly served as the government’s attack dog against the popular aspirations of the revolution by issuing pastoral statements and itinerant interviews that castigated any moral authority associated with the insurgency. The influence of liberation theology arrived after 1975 to the Jiboa Valley and was forced to operate almost entirely underground. The voice of opposition priests from the progressive church were largely silenced during the war in regions where the FMLN was not in control.⁴⁵³ The traditional Catholic Church, and increasingly, the evangelical sects of the Protestant church, continued to play a significant role during the war as a motivation for pro-government sympathies and a refuge for many in government controlled zones.

Few escaped victimization from the repression, and most distinguished clearly between acts of war and crimes. However, most were apprehensive in describing in any detail their own specific actions in the war and even fewer ventured to attribute the violence in their own lives

⁴⁵² Recollection of Platero’s homilies from interviews Guadalupe, La Laguna, El Chile, San Emigdio, San Benito.

⁴⁵³ In Verapáz, Father Valladares, a priest merely suspected of sympathies to the FMLN due to family ties, was reportedly tortured.

to specific individuals or choices. Most described the powerlessness of being caught in the middle. In the FINATA beneficiary cantón of Candelaria Arriba that benefited under Phase III of the agrarian reform, San Cayetano, one woman describes the experience of her community:

We have always suffered. During the war we were threatened by both bands and we were pressured to take one side in order to be left in peace. But when we collaborated with one, the other side attacked us. In my case, the guerillas used me as a messenger and when the Armed Forces found out they cut a branch from the Guayabo tree and beat me and my mother with it until we collapsed on the ground. That is why I tell you that we the poor (*uno de pobre*) are the ones that always suffers. Thankfully God has not abandoned us and we were able to endure and were able to stay on our land.⁴⁵⁴

One of the few exceptions that did speak about the war was an ex-Christian Democrat mayor and store owner that describes how the war unfolded in Verapáz:

PCN Presidents were imposed by wealthy men. The PCN called people to elections and fanned out to the cantones to buy votes with the promise of work, cash and meals. The Armed Forces were bought and at the moment of opening the ballot boxes, they played a key role in intimidating the population to withdraw from the electoral offices. The ballots were always removed under force of arms and even though the Christian Democrats won every time, the military stuffed the boxes with pre-marked PCN votes. It was then that opposition formed and people stopped believing in the vote, but rather in the gun and left for the hills. In 1979, a squad of eight National Guard in the town demanded that we organize a civil defense, maybe to identify who was with the subversives. We formed eight groups of 25-30 men civil patrols that went on rounds every three hours. In this time, the PCN financed the death squads and ORDEN. They received a monthly salary for identifying subversives. That is how the hate began. ORDEN members were targeted by the guerrillas. Some families like the Ramirez family, were divided by the conflict. Alfredo Ramirez was municipal secretary and an officer in ORDEN. He fled to the U.S. after death threats. Another Ramirez family member was executed by ORDEN as a suspected insurgent.⁴⁵⁵

Another ex-mayor from Verapáz from an earlier period the 1950s held a slightly different view:

I was mayor and justice of the peace in the time of General Martinez until 1955. I didn't earn a salary, unlike the officials now that earn well. I was alderman and in those times there was more respect. Now

⁴⁵⁴ Survey Interview, woman, Candelaria Arriba, San Cayetano,

⁴⁵⁵ Mauricio Alfaro, former PDC mayor and sugar cane grower in Verapáz.

no one respects anyone. The role of the National Guard was very important. They imposed respect and protected the honest citizens.”⁴⁵⁶

The war, in the discourse of counter-insurgent participants, seemed to acquire its own logic and they were swept along in a spiral of revenge killing that seem to lose political justification. Strict discretion, bordering on self-censorship, envelopes the narratives of counter-insurgent war experiences, although several key attributes associated with the described action choices are evident. Whatever trust that existed in communities under government control during the pre-war period was almost completely destroyed during the war. One survivor of the massacre in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* whose husband was killed by the military as a suspected guerrilla for not showing up patrol duty, reflected:

In these years, no one knew to whom we could complain. In the eyes of the civil patrol commander, everyone was evil. We had to bury our dead by ourselves. The National Guard did not permit anyone asking for assistance in burying their family. One woman was killed for burying her sons against Guard orders. As a result, many people buried family members within their own homes.

Roberto D'Aubuisson referred to opposition leaders and revolutionaries as a cancer and in his periodic television broadcasts and public speeches. Within the hard-line counter-insurgent villages, the descriptions of the FMLN were never as strident or sensational as the rhetoric used by political leaders on the right. Locals described insurgents as bandits or brutal killers, but also as “muchachos” and other more approving labels. Among the local landed elites, most of whom had been heavily taxed by the FMLN and some of whom had been kidnapped, there exists comprehension among some, in contrast to a profound bitterness among the hard-liners.⁴⁵⁷

La guerrilla were understanding because the only thing they asked of me was collaboration. In 1979, I lived in los Ranchos, just below Guadalupe. The Armed Forces arrived and a Lt. Guzman spoke to me, ‘Look, son of bitch, I will only tell you once. If I come back and find you here, I won’t be responsible

⁴⁵⁶ Survey interview, 115, Verapáz town center, ex-mayor, 90 yrs old.

⁴⁵⁷ To fund the war, kidnappings were continued but directed at local elites and public officials: Benjamin Molina (Verapáz), Max Menjivar, who at 66 years of age was kidnapped and held by the FMLN for three months in 1985, released only after his wife paid a ransom of \$160,000.

for what happens.’ So I left immediately for the town. Then the same Lt. Guzman came to Guadalupe and told us to gather all of the men that night. ‘Those men that don’t show up will be considered guerillas and killed. Whoever doesn’t agree should get out now.’ We all accepted and that is how we were obliged to take up arms, which were not even suitable for hunting. We spent many years defending the town that way. The truth is that there wasn’t much of choice.⁴⁵⁸

Indeed, there was little observable reverence for the military leaders of the counter-insurgency, who were widely viewed as corrupt and incompetent. While both sides are viewed as responsible for indiscriminate attacks, disproportionate blame for the worst abuses is placed on rogue individuals within the armed forces.

Repression frequently backfired in solidifying civilian opposition to the FMLN. Among the local elites that expressed greater understanding of the insurgent goals, experiences of victimization by the military had softened their perspective. In fact, the kidnapping and extortion of local elites in exchange for protection and political stability had existed long before the civil war. The FMLN had merely broken the military’s monopoly on the protection market. Many kidnappings of wealthy farmers and businesspeople during the war were conducted by the army and security forces.⁴⁵⁹

In some cases, passive collaborators among local counter-insurgent elites shifted to active collaboration when their actions raised suspicions among local military authorities. In one Usulután city, a Christian Democrat mayor that was collaborating with the FMLN arranged a staged kidnapping to restore his personal credibility with the community. In another case, a corrupt National Guard officer on the Island of Mendez, off the coast of Tecoluca, struck a deal with the PPL in the Bajo Lempa to share half of the government arms and supplies that were transferred to the post on the island in return for preservation of his authority from guerrilla attack. Rebel ambush operations would be tipped off prior to each delivery. The post commander would further strengthen his control on the island by dispatching those that had committed the worst offenses to guard the supply retrieval operation. When his superiors detected anything, he would arrange an FMLN attack on the post.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Survey Interview, Mauro Clímaco, Guadalupe, Aug. 6, 1998

⁴⁵⁹ Stanley (1996) especially chapter seven. Gibb (2000: 240-248) also provides considerable evidence of this process.

⁴⁶⁰ Both incidents were recounted by FMLN combatants involved in them, and validated by news coverage.

In the counter-insurgent communities, the perception of injustice behind the violence was largely personal and not systemic, leading to individualist survival and escape strategies. The most common of these were strategies involved helping family members escape the war, often requiring sophisticated negotiations with military commanders and sending family members abroad, as an ex-civil patroller from Molineros recounted:

Many sons in Molineros were conscripted. When my son received notification, I went to the military headquarters in San Vicente and persuaded the Sergeant to overlook my son's failure to report for duty. I argued that I had advanced arthritis in my right arm, and without his son's help, it would have to be amputated. The first time this worked, but the letters kept coming, and every three months I would travel to the cuartel to replay the drama. Even when the first Sergeant was transferred, and another, "El Chino," who was widely known as a murderer, was put in charge, I was able to stop the conscription for two years. Finally, my son was drafted and served two years, just narrowly surviving an FMLN attack on Cristiani's Acahuapa Beneficio just two weeks before his release. Soon after, I helped pay for him to stay with a relative living in Los Angeles, although he left a pregnant wife and two children. Some time after, the wife became pregnant with another man and the son stopped sending money to her. I now help care for the grandchildren.⁴⁶¹

The account represents a common escape strategy by Salvadoran families that was chosen disproportionately in government control zones during the war, particularly urban centers and those in close proximity to military garrisons. Different versions of these improvised negotiations that depended upon favored treatment by the local military authority represent the fragile social contract that existed in government controlled zones, often recounted with great satisfaction at the cunning and deceptive capacities employed.

Not unlike the insurgent tales of how they fooled the government and the military to survive and resist, the stories that dominated counter-insurgent testimonies are distinct in their tendency to resemble escape strategies. While the social fabric of communities and families was frayed by the war, this deterioration was only exacerbated by massive migration flows, which shifted the burden of childcare to extended families members. Although offset by remittance flows on which the Salvadoran and local economies are now largely dependent, migration to the U.S. which exploded in the early 1980s, also introduced a variety of perverse incentives that have yet to be converted into catalysts for development (Adams 2003).

⁴⁶¹ Interview, Jorge Martinez Cornejo, July 8, 1998. Cantón Molineros, Verapaz

b. Reformist counter-insurgency in San Ildefonso

In San Ildefonso, early preferences during the civil war clearly favored the populist middle road projected by Duarte and the Christian Democrats. However, the experience of the early 1980s was dominated by their displacement from zones of conflict and the relative insecurity that prevailed. Communities that pursued a neutral strategy meant that they were trusted by neither the military nor the FMLN. Thus, levels of external trust were low. PDC base organizations were also incapable of providing adequate assistance. Weak ties with the clientelist organizations of the PDC peasant base during the early years of the war may have had the unintentional effect of promoting local self-confidence and organizational capacity. The civilian base of the PDC, with whom many highland communities of San Ildefonso identified, were left to their own defenses to develop survival strategies during the early years of the war. Although individualist strategies predominated, the loosened grip of local landowners and the lack of military control permitted a variety of collective self-help experiences to slowly emerge.

Where cooperatives were established, local efforts to organize were challenged by the early mismanagement of ISTA, FMLN threats and violence against coop leaders and problems associated within the cooperative boards themselves. The local capacity to confront these obstacles was mixed. In San Francisco de la Cruz, the confrontation with the FMLN seemed to stiffen community resistance toward incursions by either side into local politics. The ability to hold the FMLN accountable for its mistakes by refusing active collaboration in most of the highland communities contributed to a change in insurgent policy toward the cooperatives and a factor in the strengthened sense of local autonomy.⁴⁶²

At the San Pablo Canales farm, the cooperative members were divided between a contingent of *ex-colonos* that had been favored by the Aguilúz family and the rest of the former workforce. According to several accounts, the more privileged workers monopolized most of the working capital of the farm after its transfer and were reportedly involved in corruption associated with initial credit allocations. The incidents were never fully investigated and trust within the community never recovered.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶² Interviews, Gerardo Rodríguez, San Francisco de la Cruz; Las Canoas; cooperative members and a PRTC commander.

⁴⁶³ Marchand (1996) and interviews with the author.

In any event, many of these communities were depopulated between 1981 and 1984. As they were resettled, loyalty to the PDC in the region was more contested as the UCS and other centrist peasant organizations steadily lost influence to right and left alternatives. The primary centrist peasant coalition was secured by the return of AIFLD, which orchestrated a split in the radicalized UCS in 1980. The dissenting faction broke with the government and allied with the left. UCS members that remained loyal to the government saw their leaders appointed to relatively prestigious positions in all of the agriculture agencies. AIFLD steered the pro-Duarte UCS faction into a new center-right coalition, the Democratic Popular Unity, (UPD) that included Orlando Arevalo's ACOPAI among other organizations.⁴⁶⁴ In 1983, the UPD pressured the provisional government to fully implement the land reform, countering ARENA efforts to weaken legal commitments to it (i.e. Phase II) in the constitution reform process.⁴⁶⁵

Orlando Arevalo was appointed as the President of FINATA in 1985, after several years of leading ACOPAI and at a time when support for Duarte among the peasant organizations of the UPD was wavering.⁴⁶⁶ Arevalo remained loyal to Duarte, even at the critical moment in 1986 when the government's austerity plan was galvanizing broad-based opposition. The drift to the right among the historic centrist peasant leadership increasingly alienated the PDC rural base.

Some centrist cooperative movement leaders were growing more radical and exploring alignment with the leftist super-coalition UNTS. Arevalo refused to abandon Duarte and was unceremoniously removed by the ACOPAI membership as President for being out of step with growing discontent toward the government – even among land reform beneficiaries. He would continue to serve as President of FINATA until 1989, when Duarte's term ended.

The ascent of Orlando Arevalo provided concrete employment opportunities to allies and family from San Ildefonso as promoters, secretaries, auditors and clerks, but it also

⁴⁶⁴ Casper (1986: 210). At this time, AIFLD was financing about 80% of the ACOPAI budget.

⁴⁶⁵ Diskin (1984: 8-11). A key compromise in the 1983 Constitution set the maximum land ownership at 245 hectares, when Phase II of the reform would have set it at only 100 hectares. The scope for state intervention and expropriation was also scaled back.

⁴⁶⁶ Duarte rewarded other UCS/UPD leaders. Samuel Maldonado became head of ISTA. Jorge Camacho, another ACOPAI leader, became deputy secretary of Agriculture, and Ramon Aristides Mendoza of the UCS was given a job in the Agricultural Development Bank (BFA).

solidified the electoral support of the rural sector for Duarte in the 1984 and 1985 elections. The effect in places like San Ildefonso produced a deep regard for populist leaders like Duarte and Arevalo, and by association, hope that there was indeed a middle road between armed insurgency and the reactionary militarism of the right. As one former promoter for ACOPAI described, the centrist perspective of the Christian Democrats from the top-down was politically neutral rather than counter-insurgent, gradualist in its approach to social change. This view was not entirely consistent with the expectations for change among the rural base, especially when many of Duarte's social programs failed to gain traction. It was also either politically naïve or hypocritical to think that any redistributive benefits would not be resisted by the agrarian elite. As such, the PDC philosophy in practice ended up facilitating the hard-line anti-reform efforts of the landed elite and dampening any enthusiastic support for the more radical discourse by the FMLN.

The political divisions within the PDC peasant base also suggested a discomfort with a top-down and largely utilitarian empowerment strategy. Trust in the party was personalized toward populist leaders, but attitudes toward PDC institutions such as ISTA, ACOPAI and the UCS deteriorated over time. The axes of the relationship between leaders and the peasant communities remained relatively vertical, revolving around ameliorative reconstruction projects and instrumental electoral mobilization. Accounts of local capacity differed, however they reveal a level of wartime organization that remained low by comparison to FMLN zones of influence. The people of San Ildefonso feared the military, were ambivalent about the insurgency and viewed the risks of identification as too high. Political choices were ultimately reduced to voting for the Christian Democrats. Nevertheless awakened by the land reform, many communities in San Ildefonso overcame weak ties to external political forces and honed their organizational skills in the pursuit of a locally oriented strategy of neutrality.

This testimony recounting political experiences so far points to the way in which action choices in the early years of the war were associated with competing sets of values, beliefs and dispositions – in short, the shaping of different political cultures. Trust, fairness, equity, accountability, self-confidence and valorization of one's participation are all key vantage points for exploring the impact of the war on initial choices to join the insurgency, join the counter-insurgency or attempt to remain neutral. I argue that this first stage of the war begins to sharpen the contrasting implications of these choices.

The FMLN, the military and government reform agencies under Duarte all relied on a mix of coercion, clientelism and voluntarism to mobilize supporters. However, within areas controlled by the FMLN, despite tremendous hardships, empowerment strategies challenged pre-war agrarian relations and eroded the edifice of attitudes, beliefs and actions that sustained inequality. The FMLN ability to tap into and expand a reservoir of principled voluntarism among its supporters allowed the empowerment strategy to move over time from a “hierarchical” strategy for solving collective action problems to a more social norm oriented “community” strategy that prevailed within CEBs and rural unions before the war.

In contrast to insurgent areas of control, the relative absence of pre-existing institutions or popular disposition to assume the risks of counter-insurgent participation forced the military and the government to rely ever more extensively on coercion and selective benefits. In government controlled areas, pre-war agrarian relations were adapted by counter-insurgent empowerment strategies that tended to fluctuate between “hierarchy” and “contract” solutions to the collective action problem. In other words, a negotiated participation was attempted through policies that targeted the costs and benefits of action or inaction, but state sponsored violence insured compliance with any deal.

In areas that were contested by both sides, both empowerment strategies failed to alter a resilient preference for the perceived middle road offered by the Christian Democrats. A key distinction between these empowerment strategies was that in the FMLN experience, the eventual decentralization of power in areas of control provided local autonomy, and were often unplanned and initiated from the bottom-up, while the counter-insurgent empowerment strategies employed by the military and government remained a highly contrived, top-down, and imposed delegation of responsibility with little transfer of actual power.

The weakness of these narratives as the evidence for shifts in the local political culture is of course that these accounts are incomplete, and possibly skewed or simply not well remembered. Individual memory is selective. Proponents of the greed-driven violence theory might postulate for example that despite rebel vows of poverty that moral justifications are typically post hoc, and intended to obscure the cold economic calculus at the root of all rebellion. Similarly, government officials typically contend that silence or acquiescence in counter-insurgent zones of influence is evidence of approval rather than fear.

Methodologically, these concerns are valid. The basis for contrasting these accounts of insurgent and counter-insurgent beliefs and behaviors is to suggest the foundation for expectations and motivations behind later choices – particularly those shaping postwar development expectations and leading to the creation or reinvention of new local institutions. The true test will involve how these claims hold up in explaining postwar behavior. For the moment, I suspend judgment on the validity of this evidence, except to suggest two caveats to the greed-driven rebellion arguments, which essentially reflect the foundation of the U.S. framing of FMLN motivations as well. The first is that it is generally accepted that the FMLN would have been quickly stopped unless it had established a significant bond of trust with the civilian population. Given the intensity of the violence and duration of the war, this trust was most likely not couched in hopes of quick material payoff. The ebb and flow of effective recruiting by the FMLN suggests that selective benefits, material or otherwise, were insufficient to retain a peak fighting force.

The second point is that FMLN combatants, for the most part, described the overall collective discipline of insurgency with great pride, but were also surprisingly willing to discuss mistakes, excesses, and war crimes. The capacity for open self-criticism, albeit limited, was a quality not found as widespread among the counter-insurgent constituency. FMLN admission of errors and detailed accounts of quite serious human rights violations stands in stark contrast to the refusal on the part of combatants, civil defense forces, and civilian witnesses in government zones of control to discuss even well documented comparable offenses. The silence of active and passive collaborators of the government in counter-insurgent zones of influence strongly suggests a continuation of pre-war agrarian relations.

C. EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES DURING LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT: DECONCENTRATION OF POWER

The period between 1985 and 1989 marked a shift from an almost exclusively military strategy by both the government and the FMLN to one that re-emphasizes the political component. This

strategic shift in the war served as a catalyst for decentralization for the FMLN and the government. Failing to overrun the Salvadoran military or spark a popular insurrection, the FMLN was forced to fall back to a guerrilla war strategy conducted by smaller, more independent units within a wider more decentralized support system. Base organizations were dispersed into temporary internal and external refuge, only to repopulate FMLN control zones beginning in 1986 and demand human rights protections as citizens and seize land. These repopulations sparked the formation of many of the grassroots and non-governmental organizations that appeared in the final years of the war. In government controlled conflictive zones, the attempted pacification of rural civil society continued to be guided by a top-down stabilizing strategy that steered demands, grievances and some increased funding toward a revived municipal government. While most key decisions were still made by centralized, donor-driven government agencies located in the capital, responsibility for security and humanitarian assistance was deconcentrated to mayors. Both strategies created new space during the war for experimentation with semi-autonomous local governance, albeit within the strict limitations of the conflict.

The shift in internal party politics began not long after Duarte's election in 1984, which the U.S. viewed as a critical step in legitimating procedural democracy as a wedge between the paramilitary right and the revolutionary left. The institutionalization of Christian Democrat rule and the perception of a moderate path to political stability was also essential to mollify an unsettled U.S. Congress that generally restricted any overt support to D'Aubuisson or other death squad supporters in ARENA.

Soon after taking power, the PDC suffered a steady decline under the pressure of an increasing fiscal imbalance, the party's own corruption and the incapacity to negotiate with either an ARENA-PCN faction that controlled the legislature or the FMLN at the nascent peace talks. Duarte again attempted expansionist economic policies before reverting back to stabilization policies as a condition for desperately needed U.S. assistance.⁴⁶⁷ By 1985, U.S. aid replaced the IMF stand-by lending agreement as the principal adjustment authority and continued aid flows, which had reached \$429 million in 1986 alone, were tied to a new

⁴⁶⁷ By expansionist policies, the PDC increased salaries for public sector employees, minimum wages for urban workers, reduced interest rates, increased credit and social spending and fixed prices for food and basic services.

stabilization effort beginning with an official devaluation of the colon.⁴⁶⁸ Further austerity reforms that included relaxing price controls, export promotion (particularly non-traditional goods) and dismantling public protections against imports, failed to stimulate the economy and Duarte steadily lost popular support. The U.S. conditioned aid on a second devaluation, but the government refused. Instead, a “war tax” proposal designed to shift a greater burden of the public expense of the war to the wealthy was met with a boycott of Legislative Assembly sessions by ARENA and the PCN, a one day business strike on January 22, 1987, and a spate of successful constitutional challenges to the proposed tax, all of which forced Duarte to rescind the tax under no opposition from the U.S..⁴⁶⁹ Fiscal deficits were therefore reduced through cuts in public spending, investment and wages. U.S. aid and growing remittance flows effectively sustained the Salvadoran economy and prevented a debt crisis.

By the mid-1980s, Roberto D’Aubuisson had become the second most popular political figure in the country, particularly among the most reactionary elites, and a wide segment of the rural population. As the reputed leader of the Salvadoran death squads, the U.S. blocked his candidacy for President. The defeat of D’Aubuisson by Duarte was soon followed by ceding party leadership to the allegedly moderate, Alfredo Cristiani, who won the presidency in 1989 on the heels of sweeping municipal and legislative gains a year earlier. Beginning in the late 1980s, ARENA emerged as the leading political force and the PDC was on a downward trajectory to minor party status.⁴⁷⁰

Despite having different political goals, both the PDC and ARENA endorsed the U.S. sponsored stabilizing approach to empowerment, built around a fundamental consensus that opposed the FMLN.⁴⁷¹ While they disagreed fiercely on questions of economic policy,

⁴⁶⁸ The exchange rate remained 2.5 colones to the dollar, the official rate since 1970, although the black market rate reached 6.5. In 1986, the colon was devalued to 5, but black market devaluation pressure continued to push the value downward exceeding 8 colones per dollar in 1990. Remittances were generally not included in the formal monetary system during the 1980s, but rather fueled an extensive black exchange market. Rosa and Segovia (1989)

⁴⁶⁹ The proposed package included increased direct taxes and a variable surcharge on capital asset taxes over \$20,000. See Segovia in Boyce (1995), Hedges (1987: 20a), Preston (1987: A15).

⁴⁷⁰ The PDC won only 16% of the vote in 1994, 9% in 1997, and barely avoided extinction in 1999 with 4%.

⁴⁷¹ Differences in policy orientation between the PDC and ARENA are diminished when it comes to actual implementation. Despite promoting populist protections for small producers and businesses that were also

throughout the war, the leading Salvadoran private sector lobbying association (ANEP), and economic think tank (FUSADES) found common ground with the Duarte government in delegitimizing the economic war tactics of the FMLN. Union organizing, strikes, land occupations, takeovers of state institutions, and organized pressure of legislators, were condemned as FMLN orchestrated measures to destabilize an elected government. Conversely, the exercise of voting was elevated to the level of ceremony, as the only acceptable channel through which acceptable political opinion might be transmitted (Brodhead and Herman 1984; Bonner 1984: 290-321).

The deconcentration of FMLN forces, the dispersion of mass organizations and the annual provision of about \$400 million in U.S. military aid all fed into claims that the insurgency was winding down. In November 1989, the FMLN launched a strategic counter-offensive that became the Salvadoran Tet. Together with other internal and external factors, the 1989 offensive effectively opened space for a negotiated end to the war.

1. Insurgent Mobilization II: FMLN Deconcentration

The re-election of Reagan and U.S. military buildup, the intensification of the air war, and Duarte's electoral victory in El Salvador forced a shift in FMLN strategy toward a war of attrition and economic sabotage. Contrary to some arguments that external support dictated shifts in FMLN political and military strategy, in this section I make a case for domestic and very much bottom-up factors that also informed the reforms taken. As noted in previous chapters, external shifts matter for explaining FMLN strategic choices. While the insurgents were not dependent upon external aid, a revolutionary government mostly likely would have been. Smyth argues that the Soviet reform government under Gorbachev had communicated its preference for a negotiated agreement as early as 1986. Similar signals were conveyed from Latin American allies. The shift toward alternative endgame strategies began well before 1989 (Smyth 1992).

contrary to the interests of the oligarchy, most failed to have any enduring effect and were easily blocked and quickly rolled back under fading U.S. support and ascending ARENA political power.

The idea was to expand the theater of war through a greater frequency of smaller, more geographically dispersed attacks. In this new strategy, each combatant had to become a leader, both militarily and politically. Squads were reduced to 3-5 people that were expected to be self-sufficient. This meant establishing trust among new communities whose political sympathies were undefined. Successful, alternative supply structures were re-established in a much more decentralized way to provide food, shelter, information and a network for new recruits. Theft was prohibited, but war taxation was sanctioned. According to one combatant, minimal funds were provided for basic expenses and combatants reassembled in camps twice a month to report on progress.

One combatant described this shift in strategy:

We had to form our own self-support structure, to provide supplies and food, without altering our ideals and becoming thieves. We were given funds for the basics, like cigarettes. Every fifteen days we went to the encampment to give a report on our actions. We had to arrive in a zone where we were not known without friends, to open new territory without cover like Columbus did in his first voyage. The slogan was walk, understand, win (*andar, entender, conquistar*). (Interview, Omar, San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, April 9, 2006)

Gibb gives a detailed illustration of how the FMLN small group tactics worked to open new corridors between rebel control zones by recruiting networks of civilian collaborators to provide information, food and shelter.⁴⁷² Massive concentrations of force, while effective in the early stages of the war, would be of less utility now.

The first problem arriving in new areas was that they had no idea who they could trust. As a first step, therefore, two of them would blacken their faces, put on captured army Special Forces uniforms and go into hamlet pretending to be soldiers – to gauge the reaction. In many households they could feel people's rejection. After this initial visit, the third member of the group would turn up in civilian clothes, pretending to be selling things. He would find out as much as possible about the villagers, angling to find their views, asking whether their children were able to go to school, whether they got enough work to buy food, whether they were worried about illness. Finally, he would ask whether they had seen soldiers or not. If they reported the appearance of [the first two rebels] disguised as Special Forces – then they knew they had a potential recruit. The final step would be for all three of them to return at night dressed as guerrillas – and try openly to sell their cause.

⁴⁷² Gibb (2000: 230-231). See also Chris Norton, *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 26, 1986; April 14, 1987

Deconcentration of forces was a slow and meticulous reaction to the shifting demands of the war and new conditions for sustained participation made by rank and file FMLN combatants. Disillusionment with the failure to defeat the government militarily prior to the elections, long assignments far from home, loss of the civilian masses, and the challenges of working more independently in new uncharted regions, all resulted in widespread desertions after 1984.⁴⁷³ Deconcentration of forces was in part a strategy to allow combatants to fight closer to home and join for larger operations only periodically. The FMLN's initial response to force depletion was a campaign of forced recruitment, which ended as an utter failure. Overall force levels in the FMLN dropped during this period.

To some extent, the process of adaptation occurred from the bottom-up. A shift to the new tactics of the counter-insurgency forced greater coordination and innovation on the ground to concentrate and deconcentrate resistance and invent more effective tactical weapons long before the top officers of the five armies formally decided to unify the central command. Much of the strategic debate within the national leadership of the FMLN, including preparations for a possible U.S. invasion, were for popular consumption. Major strategic shifts were often responding to decisions that were being taken by field commanders in reaction to the choices or preferences of the combatants themselves. Despite the vertical command structure of the FMLN, tactical decisions were decentralized. One former FPL commander in the paracentral zone argued that,

In reality, it was central command that was adapting to our reality. When the decision came down that we were going to move from concentrated to deconcentrated forces and carry the war to every street and town, we had already been doing that for months out of necessity.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷³ Gibb (2000: 232) notes that U.S. intelligence estimates of casualties on both sides were down significantly in 1985, and that among RN forces on the Guazapa volcano, civilian supporters declined by 80% and RN combatants dropped from about 800 to 200.

⁴⁷⁴ Interview, Pablo Parada Andino, zone commander of southern Tecoluca and Zacatecoluca during 1982-83. One example of invented weaponry was the "rampla" as an invented anti-aircraft device that catapulted a charge that exploded at particular altitudes that was designed for the sub-500s helicopter gunships that were introduced in 1985.

Deconcentration was also a central feature of the U.S. orchestrated counter-insurgent strategy, which continued to focus on a revived municipal government. Local elections in 1985 gave a boost in legitimacy to rural mayors. The municipal code was amended in 1986 giving local governments greater autonomy and citizens greater means for local participation. The formal autonomy of the municipal government was recognized in the 1983 Constitution, which abolished the powers of departmental governors over mayors and eliminated an intermediate administrative tier of 39 districts. CONARA funding increased, often in alliance with food for work programs administered by international relief organizations allied with the U.S. government. To surmount administrative problems, civic pacification programs were retooled by the U.S. when it launched Municipalities in Action (MEA) in 1986, a small grants initiative for basic infrastructure administered by CONARA.⁴⁷⁵

MEA targeted municipalities in conflict zones still under government control. Projects from a pre-determined short list of social infrastructure and essential services were “chosen” through “cabildo abiertos,” or open town meetings which are proscribed by the municipal code to be convened four times per year. Accountability improvements were inferred by the higher frequency of complaints and demands being directed at mayors, the frequency of *cabildos* and the formation of local project oriented associations. In addition to obligating quarterly cabildo abiertos, the 1986 constitutional reform made it possible for citizens to form officially recognized communal associations to advise local councils and call popular consultations on municipal initiatives. Although labeled “apolitical,” the MEA program listed as its success greater coordination with the military, which conveyed an improvement in the military’s image in the eyes of the beneficiaries. MEA was considered the most effective of all U.S. counter-insurgent efforts in El Salvador.⁴⁷⁶

The alleged success of the MEA project stood in stark contrast to the failure of CONARA more generally. Both initiatives were initially operated as highly centralized programs, where all financial and planning decisions were taken in San Salvador. CONARA also suffered from the high levels of corruption and clientelism in the participating line

⁴⁷⁵ The MEA operations manual capped the maximum cost of eligible infrastructure projects at \$12,500.

⁴⁷⁶ Austin, et al. (1988: 11). On the donor perceptions of MEA as a counter-insurgency program, see also Sollis (1993a, 1993b)

ministries (public works, health, education).⁴⁷⁷ Despite this top-down legacy, MEA was intended to be the principal mechanism for reinforcing community input into local reconstruction efforts, thereby stabilizing areas faced with insurgent challenges to government influence.

The initial internal evaluations of MEA by USAID were effusively positive, arguing that the increasing numbers of *cabildos* were evidence of participatory accountable local democracy. “It [MEA] has proved to be extraordinarily successful, popular, and an exemplary use of scarce resources....there have been significant changes in attitudes;... the project identification and implementation process is promoting local participatory democracy in significant ways.”⁴⁷⁸

These benefits of MEA are somewhat overblown considering that they represented less than 3% of public investment in the targeted departments and provided less than 1% of total employment. Subsequent evaluations played down MEA’s impact, arguing that the quality of local participation was often ignored, although far more important than the quantity (Seligson and Córdova Macías 1995). In the context of weak or non-existent state assistance for years, any project was welcomed by rural communities in conflictive zones. However, the program encouraged mayors to mobilize much greater demand for projects in the *cabildos* than available funding could pay for. Schwartz challenges many of USAID’s success claims by underscoring the limits to MEA success in the eyes of U.S. military advisors. “Since the program is conceived and financed by the United States, and since its orientation is specifically local, it establishes little loyalty toward the government and armed forces of El Salvador.” (53) In an effort to sidestep the corruption of military administrators, the U.S. created a parallel agency that was more accountable to USAID than to the PDC or military.

The invention of MEA was significant because it was the first quasi-independent social investment fund in El Salvador, a phenomenon that attracted increasing donor investment in the post-war period and would proliferate throughout Latin America. It sidestepped the problem of

⁴⁷⁷ Sollis (1993) on CONARA corruption associated with projects in Usulután.

⁴⁷⁸ Stout, Terner, and Orr (1990). MEA operated almost exclusively in some 30 municipalities in Chalatenango, Morazán and Usulután up to 1990. See also Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc (1994); Blair, Booth, Córdova, and Seligson (1995: 31-38), and Seligson (1994).

ineffective and corrupt line ministries or military officials by erecting a parallel agency that duplicated some services and redirected the chain of command primarily to the foreign donor.

The FMLN response to CONARA and MEA, particularly after the local election sweep of ARENA mayors in 1988, was to give ultimatums to the new mayors – cooperate, leave or be killed. Of course, the killing of adversarial mayors was not unprecedented, beginning in the region perhaps with Atilio Cañas of Tecoluca in 1977 by the FPL and Napoleón Chavela, a UDN opposition mayor in San Cayetano Istepeque in 1979 by right wing death squads. However, the ERP publicly announced the new anti-mayor policy and began killing, abducting and generally forcing out mayors considered to be working against the FMLN, mainly in Usulután and Morazán.⁴⁷⁹ By mid-1985, FMLN forces had killed two mayors, kidnapped another 8, and 32 municipal offices had been destroyed. By October of that year, 25% of the 262 mayors had been forced out.⁴⁸⁰

Beginning in 1985, San Ildefonso elected five PDC mayors in a row, some of whom turned over duties after fleeing under threat of execution from the FMLN. Carlos Soriano was elected to the first of two terms beginning in 1990 after finishing the term of his predecessor. He credited his survival in office to his collaboration with FMLN demands. A construction supervisor working with the PDC mayors described the 52 CONARA projects that he managed for the PDC mayor beginning in the late 1980s. Most were road repairs, school construction, and other small public works projects that provided work and were located close to the town center or main road. There was no public deliberation about priorities besides the mayor simply deciding where the projects were most needed and where relative security could be ensured.⁴⁸¹

In Tecoluca, Mauricio Alvarenga, was elected to three consecutive terms as mayor under ARENA between 1985-1994, albeit under conditions where few people voted. He attributed his endurance to a mutually respectful working relationship with FPL leaders. This

⁴⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch (1993: 17), United Nations (1995: 365). The policy was eventually approved by the FMLN high command.

⁴⁸⁰ Miles and Ostertag (1991: 222) put the number of mayors who resigned at 120, and the number that were forced to move to the provincial capitals at 64, which combined with 8 mayors who were killed, sum to 192, or 73% of all mayors.

⁴⁸¹ At least two former San Ildefonso mayors have noted with pride their administration of municipal road projects that also happened to pass in front of their homes.

political pragmatism derived in part from Alvarenga having brothers active on both sides of the conflict.⁴⁸² Local development projects were limited to small scale infrastructure, and local organizing was confined to security functions (civil defense), since an estimated 70% of the homes were occupied by caretaker families that had been displaced from the *cantónes*. Despite few local achievements, Alvarenga boasted of his participation in various USAID funded trips and trainings for mayors in the U.S.

In Guadalupe, Juan Cerritos epitomized the hard-line counter-insurgent mayor. Cerritos was elected for the first time in 1985 and would go on to serve four consecutive terms as an ARENA functionary, and then a fifth in 2003 under PCN. Unlike his peers, Cerritos did not collaborate with the FMLN and survived perhaps due to protection afforded by the military detachments posted on nearby coffee fincas. His persistence in office had less to do with the capacity to deliver projects or to leverage provided by his allegiance to the large coffee growers in the municipality. Although a steady trickle of USAID funded MEA or CONARA projects were sprinkled around, throughout the war, Guadalupe remained one of the poorest towns in the region. Rather, he represented the pre-war style of local rule that equated good governance with political stability and a acquiescent population. As in most ARENA towns, his success in limiting the influence of the FMLN was rewarded with repeated appointments by the party as ARENA candidate, which almost guaranteed re-election among the staunchly conservative voters of Guadalupe.

The municipal dimension of the counter-insurgent empowerment strategy rested on weak local institutions that were almost entirely dependent on outside assistance and generally unaccountable to the public in local decision making. If only symbolically, mayors were nevertheless viewed as increasingly legitimate interlocutors between state and society.

⁴⁸² Alvarenga had one brother in the FMLN, another in the air force and a third in the civil patrol. One, Raul Alvarenga, was the justice of the peace and reportedly directed death squad activities by the local National Guard.

a. Refugees and repopulation

By the mid-1980s, the problem of the displaced population had become a crisis.⁴⁸³ The Salvadoran government attempts to resettle displaced families in secured areas under its influence did not work. Pressure was building for repopulation independently of CONARA or the military, often driven by FMLN organizing within the refugee camps. The first attempt to establish a permanent repopulation in a non-militarized zone occurred in 1985 in Tenancingo, Cuscatlán under the auspices of the Catholic Church and FUNDASAL, a Salvadoran NGO.⁴⁸⁴

Taking advantage of the Duarte policy on human rights and with hope of reconstituting local popular governments that could challenge newly elected mayors, the FMLN decided to begin a strategy of repopulation in 1985. The Christian Committee for the Displaced of El Salvador (CRIPDES) was formed in late 1984 and the National Coordination for Repopulation (CNR) averaged two years later by the FPL as civilian non-governmental advocates for the rights of the displaced. At least 25% of the population had been displaced, with nearly 250,000 living in external exile in Mexico and Central America.⁴⁸⁵ This shift in policy also responded to a desire by many families of combatants who had reluctantly left the conflictive zones in 1983-84 to be closer to their sons, daughters or siblings and to serve the revolution in some capacity. A second factor was the loss of confidence among the refugee population that the government or UNHCR would ever achieve the conditions necessary for safe return. A final rationale for the repopulation strategy reflected the increased probability of an eventual negotiation, before which as much liberated land as possible would need to be occupied by the civilian base.

Repopulation was viewed as necessary in order to improve supply and recruitment networks, occupy strategic properties and in some cases to reunite combatant families. The FMLN carefully orchestrated the repopulation of control zones as early as 1987 when a meeting was convened of some 20 national non-governmental organizations to strike an

⁴⁸³ The 1986 earthquake that left 300,000 homeless exacerbated the war related displacement.

⁴⁸⁴ Wood (2003) provides the most extensive analysis of the Tenancingo experience.

⁴⁸⁵ The UNHCR estimated that by 1984, 400,000 Salvadorans had been internally displaced, 500,000 had migrated to the U.S., and 200,000 had sought refuge in camps or individually in Mexico and Central America.

agreement regarding how the accompaniment work would be rationalized. Organizations were given a geographic responsibility, but were given some autonomy for how to conduct their paperwork. This type of political accord demonstrates the high level of coordination of which the FMLN was capable at that point.⁴⁸⁶

Exercising elaborate ties to international solidarity, the FMLN deftly utilized the cover of humanitarian protection and support to expand their rearguard by including flows of recruits from the network of refugee camp populations, both internal and external. By the mid-1980s, some 40,000 Salvadorans were living in external camps in Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá and Belize. Within the camps, self-governance structures and development initiatives continued to evolve and mature, again, responsive to the war effort (Thompson 1995). Production cooperatives were set up with international assistance, literacy and health training was intensified, and refugee demands for protection and respect for human rights grew more belligerent behind the shield of the United Nations Human Rights Commission and other solidarity groups. At the same time, as much as 30% of all donations were diverted to the war effort and the camps provided both a haven for recuperating combatants and a source of fresh recruits.⁴⁸⁷ As a result, violent incursions into the camps by Honduran and Salvadoran soldiers were common and security measures were also a standard aspect of camp organization.

As with other stages of the FMLN experiment in empowering local people to find solutions to the many challenges of fighting an insurgency, the refugee camps reflected the essential tensions of emerging self-governance under the hostile and authoritarian climate of a civil war. Leaders were provided the space to rise up, and they did. However, the consequences of this newfound autonomy did not fit perfectly with the military demands of the war. Accommodations were made by both civilian camp leaders and FMLN commanders, but within the civilian and combatant population loyal to the FMLN a dispersion of power was underway that could not be reconcentrated as before. As an intended or unintended consequence of the tactics necessary to sustain the insurgency, previously silent and fearful

⁴⁸⁶ Among other examples, Gonzalez (1993) cites a 1983 meeting between the FMLN and the principal religious humanitarian organizations working in El Salvador to negotiate an end to FMLN interference in relief programs. See Foley (1996: 74-75).

⁴⁸⁷ Prior research on the functioning of the refugee camps in Colomoncagua, Honduras under the ERP was conducted in 1995 and 1996. See McElhinny in Lauria-Santiago and Binford (2004:147-165) and Macdonald and Gatehouse (1995).

people found their voice and shed their misconceptions that any leader, landholder or revolutionary commander alike, were “endiosado.” At the same time, the refuge opportunities were almost entirely dependent on outside donations.

Through CRIPDES, the FMLN sent the first group of 85 families from nearby internal temporary refuge sites that set out from the hills to the east of Tecoluca to resettle San Carlos Lempa in June 1986 – the third major national repopulation since 1985.⁴⁸⁸ After arriving clandestinely in San Carlos Lempa, with the accompaniment of the Red Cross and the Non-Governmental Human Rights Organization, the repatriated families began to clear land. After about a week, the military was tipped off by informants in the area and arrived to arrest the group. They were held and some were tortured during a six week incarceration at the garrison in Zacatecoluca, but escaped death after the human rights community protested the capture. After being released from military arrest, the families were sent to *Calle Real* – an urban refuge on the northern outskirts of San Salvador run by the Catholic Church. Soon after, the first group of eleven families made their way to another refuge in the village of Santa Cruz, in Berlin, Usulután. Grassroots organizing typically intensified during resettlements to meet basic needs and demand protection for the rights of displaced people.

According to one estimate, some 50,000 displaced people challenged the government’s restrictions on resettlement and with the accompaniment of local and international solidarity, returned to conflictive zones during the war (Kevin Murray 1995: 188). Most did so in support of the FMLN.

b. Agricultural Cooperatives

Parallel to the repopulations, the agricultural cooperative movement began to mobilize politically as well as they returned to farms that had been relatively abandoned since the early years of the war. This recovery of the agricultural cooperatives reflected the opening of the space to once again produce in conflictive zones and to organize politically as rural gremios. Cooperativismo meant different things in each of the case study municipalities, but in general it

⁴⁸⁸ Interviews with repopulation leaders, José de Jesús “Chungo” Amaya, Alicia Hernández, San Carlos Lempa, and Alejandro Valladares, Las Pampas, Tecoluca. Other repatriation sites included Sisiguayo, Santa Cruz, Berlin, Las Mesitas, and parts of Zacatecoluca. See also Moreno (2001: 35)

reflected a crumbling allegiance between the principal agrarian reform cooperative federations for the Christian Democrats. For some, this shift in elite access resulted in a stronger alliance with the FMLN or ARENA, while many cooperatives clung to their loyalty to Duarte as the ever more elusive middle road.

The cooperative movement was re-emerging during a disastrous period for agriculture, buried by debt and increasingly vulnerable as Duarte's agricultural protections were dismantled by an administration voluntarily willing to cede to U.S. and IMF imposed austerity measures. On the other hand, at the national level progressive social forces, including cooperative federations, were uniting.⁴⁸⁹ Within the repopulation movement almost all production was organized collectively during the war and demanded training. Similar to what Wood refers to as "insurgent" cooperatives in her analysis of shifting agrarian relations in wartime Usulután, the collective farms were also established in the late 1980s in FPL control zones in San Vicente.

Despite the stimulus that the repopulation movement and insurgent cooperatives gave to the principle of collective production, this choice was severely conditioned by the protection and insistence of the FMLN. ARENA began linking debt forgiveness proposals for the cooperative sector to the dismantling of "proindiviso" restrictions to land ownership and sale. In the traditional reform cooperative sector, the area under collective production was declining steadily. In government control zones, service cooperatives dominated by large growers that farmed individual plots were the norm. **The paradox of revitalized rural activism in the late 1980s, was that it combined an unprecedented rewriting of pre-war property relations provoked by insurgent communities with a secular shift toward individual modes of production.**

In the paracentral region, the Federation of Cooperative Associations of Agricultural Production in El Salvador (FEDECOOPADES) supported cooperatives, both old and new, that regrouped in the central and coastal sub-regions of Tecoluca and Zacatecoluca beginning in 1987.⁴⁹⁰ FEDECOOPADES formed at the outset of the agrarian reform and at its peak was

⁴⁸⁹ Some of these organizations including elements of Duarte's major coalition formed the UNTS. The U.S. quickly sponsored the formation of UNOC, a similar cluster of organizations although more loyal to the Christian Democrats.

⁴⁹⁰ FEDECOOPADES organized as many as 200 traditional reform cooperatives and had significant influence in the coop sector.

supporting some 200 different cooperatives. Services focused on all aspects of legal and practical training, credit and infrastructure to strengthen cooperative production as well as meeting basic needs. Loosely aligned with the FPL, FEDECOOPADES closely accompanied the formation of the FMLN cooperatives in the southern paracentral region.

In the Jiboa Valley, production was less affected than in other conflictive zones, despite periodic attacks on all of the principal agro-industrial targets, including severe damage to Cristiani's Acahuapa Beneficio. The two primary cooperatives in the region, the coffee growers Nonualco Cooperative, and the local sugar grower's organization, ACOPARVE, were service coops that focused on pooling member purchasing power on credit, inputs and commercialization. Producers in both sectors were affected by the war and the cooperatives themselves stopped functioning under unpaid debts, but there was a relative continuity in the pre-war agrarian relations despite being labeled as cooperatives.

In San Ildefonso, the agrarian reform had a much more profound effect than in the other municipal case studies. People that fled the highland communities returned in 1984 with a green light from a more tolerant FMLN command in the zone. Prior FMLN errors had not been forgiven, but cooperative members were anxious to cultivate their lands. The FMLN had not permitted the planting of ISTA land in the early years of the war, but relented. A modest war tax was imposed on cooperative and individual alike, which appeared indiscriminate and unfair to many small farmers in the region.⁴⁹¹

In addition to the four ISTA properties, FINATA had partially negotiated the transfer of three others (Las Canoas, San Francisco de la Cruz, and La Carbonera). Absentee owners continued to charge rent for land use during the war, and questions regarding debt and titling amounted to an insidious web of deceit between the reform beneficiaries and ISTA or FINATA officials. Most of the cooperatives were simply misinformed by government officials about their rights and options to achieve legal ownership of their land, thus perpetuating dependence on these agencies. It was also evident that these humiliating and costly interactions with the government were never enough to trigger more organized pressure by the cooperatives to demand their rights.

⁴⁹¹ Interview, Coop leaders, Sihuatepeque and El Limón. San Ildefonso, Aug. 24, 1998.

In contrast to the ambivalent views that many cooperative members held for the FMLN during the war, sympathy or loyalty toward Duarte and Christian Democrat leaders are evidently unshaken by the failure of the PDC to consolidate real improvements for their rural base. PDC activists from the town center of San Ildefonso and ACOPAI promoters from nearby cooperative in San Vicente visited the highland farms regularly throughout the war. The extreme poverty in most of highland San Ildefonso persisted even after they returned to cultivate their lands. Still, loyalty to goals and frequently promised favors of the Christian Democrats, tactically translated into political neutrality.

ACOPAI was perhaps the most influential peasant association in San Ildefonso as well as the client organization of Orlando Arevalo, who attempted to balance his constituency between the hard-line counter-insurgent forces of the right and the FMLN aligned organizations on the left. However, Arevalo, like his mentor, Duarte, was a resilient politician. Alliances of convenience were struck repeatedly during the period of renewed rural activism that at various moments linked ACOPAI with the FMLN, then at another moment with ARENA. Arevalo was acrobatic enough to manage these rather dramatic political swings, and could always ensure the loyalty of a significant segment of his followers. However, many cooperative members in San Ildefonso began to lose faith, although the decisive moment was not until the PDC was virtually marginalized as a party and as a PDC deputy in the Salvadoran Congress, Arevalo switched to ARENA in 1991. Some of Arevalo's critics within ACOPAI had little choice but to follow him to the right as he reinvented his political organization under the auspices of ARENA. Arevalo helped engineer rural support for ARENA in return for a slot for deputy on the party's national slate in the 1991 elections and patronage for his organization.

The influence of Arevalo was responsible in part for one of the most visible investments to strengthen the cooperative sector in the paracentral region – the Lempa Acahuapa irrigation district. The details of this project, which take us into the post-war period, illustrate many of the contradictions of the Christian Democrat empowerment strategy. The original cooperative that Arevalo held found, Miralempa, which was wedged between San Ildefonso and San Vicente on the southern ridge of the Pan American highway, was one of the prime beneficiaries of this megaproject. Arevalo's allies within the cooperative and the National Peasant Confederation more broadly, were positioned to govern the political operation of the district's water users association. Included as one of the four famous irrigation districts that were

associated with former President Molina's ill-fated agrarian transformation plans in the 1970s, the Lempa Acahuapa project had been on the drawing board for decades.⁴⁹² It was resurrected in the mid-1980s as a mechanism to improve the productivity and diversification of cooperative farms on both sides of the upper Lempa valley, but the project was also guided by counter-insurgent aims.⁴⁹³

On the San Vicente side, the ISTA and FINATA cooperatives were located in what the FMLN considered an expansion zone at the time, with many of the most prominent cooperatives offering only passive collaboration. With the Fifth Brigade garrison located in the city of San Vicente to the east, and the Pan-American Highway to the north, the Acahuapa River valley that flowed into the Lempa was difficult to enter for FMLN forces to the North and South. On the Usulután side of the Lempa, the rugged slopes of the eastern villages of Berlin and San Agustín facilitated the presence of several FMLN factions. Cooperative farms were either abandoned or under threat by the FMLN and attitudes toward the government were less favorable. The Lempa Acahuapa project was designed as a stabilizing investment for both sides of the upper Lempa valley.

Financing in the form of a \$10.5 million Inter-American Development Bank loan was approved in December, 1986, and after several years of costly delays, construction of the irrigation channel got underway in 1991 that would divert water from the 15 de Septiembre dam to a potential user population of some 1,100 farmers and a potential area of 2,600 ha.⁴⁹⁴ Operational irrigation didn't begin until 1994 and by 1998, only between 50 and 100 farmers were paying to irrigate 200 to 400 hectares. The Lempa Acahuapa district was the least

⁴⁹² Two irrigation districts were constructed in the early 1970s to the northwest of the capital, in Zapotitan (3,000 ha) and Aticoyo (4,000 ha). The other planned mega-districts targeted the Pacific Basin of the Rio Grande river in San Miguel-Usulután; the Lower Lempa valley of La Paz-San Vicente-Usulután. More recently, a fifth project has been proposed for the Rio Jiboa Valley of La Paz. According to a 1998 Technoserve irrigation study, about 273,000 hectares are suitable for irrigation in El Salvador, but less than 45,000 (22%) have access to it.

⁴⁹³ ISTA cooperatives on the San Vicente side included Parras Lempa (1144 ha), La Quesera (703 ha), El Chorro (367 ha), and El Marquezado (435 ha), as well as several FINATA coops like Miralempa. On the Usulután side, three ISTA farms were affected, Las Piletas (529 ha), El Corozal (565 ha), and los Horcones (693 ha).

⁴⁹⁴ Delays in the start up of the project increased the overall costs of the project and required an additional extension loan for approximately \$4 million. To give some idea of the costs that these delays, payments on the principal on the original loan will begin in July, 2005 and continue until July 2027. Even before the first repayment, El Salvador has paid \$2.2 million in interest (%20 of the original loan amount). By the end of the repayment period, another \$1.9 million in interest will have been paid, bringing the total cost of the loan to \$4.1 million (28% of the total project cost).

contentious and smallest of the planned irrigation megaprojects, but it was the first major investment in Salvadoran agriculture in over a decade.

Designed to be operating near full capacity by 1993, the project failed to meet expected targets in almost every area. A variety of factors were cited, many of which may be attributable to the general decline of agriculture in the 1980s (low government extension capacity, titling problems) but also donor inflexibility and inadequate grasp of the political aspects of the project. The overarching problem was a top-down design that was skewed by the technical advice of IDB and Ministry of Agriculture officials, few of which had any credible understanding of the political challenges facing the targeted beneficiaries. Repeating many of the errors of the agrarian reform, heavy-handed attempts to organize water users ultimately created deep divisions between the San Vicente water users loyal to ISTA and Arevalo, and the Usulután water users that included a mix of independent small and medium farmers and FMLN occupied properties.⁴⁹⁵

c. “Algo feo paso” (Something Horrible Happened)

Of the self-deceptions that were considered necessary by FMLN combatants to assimilate, the unquestioned loyalty to Mayo Sibrián, during the period between 1986 and 1990 when most of the paracentral region was under his command, represents the most grave miscalculation of FMLN of the entire war.

The push for a military victory in 1983-1984 had exhausted the human capacity of the FMLN. For the first time, guns outnumbered recruits. In fact, most combatants were re-equipped in mid-1980s. The period of deconcentration was followed with an increase in desertions and a decline in force levels due to exhaustion, disillusionment with the inevitability of a longer war, and refusal to serve without the security of a large group, sometimes far from home. The FMLN war of attrition strategy began with a reduced fighting force, and the period following the 1985 unification was one of rebuilding. Conscription, first attempted by the ERP

⁴⁹⁵ Oscar Gutierrez, ex-Minister of Agriculture under ARENA President Armando Calderon Sol is also one of the larger landowners on the Usulután side.

for six months in 1983, was used intermittently to replenish the ranks. Children (below 18 years of age) were increasingly used as eligible combatants.

In addition to land occupations, new groups of young men and women were returning from the Mesa Grande and San Antonio refugee camps in Honduras to serve in the FPL in San Vicente. According to the only reconstructed record of the San Vicente front during this period, Mayo Sibrián was known to prefer young recruits.⁴⁹⁶ Deeply convinced that the front had been compromised by government infiltrators, younger recruits were less likely to be “contaminated,” by spies. The refugee camps and repopulations continued to provide a fresh flow of new recruits, mostly teens.

Combatants who served under Mayo during 1986 described his rule with a strange mix of admiration and fear. He had been a highly effective, if ruthless, military commander who was captured in 1985 when returning from Cuba. He was tortured, and then somewhat surprisingly released without the exchange of prisoners. He was sent to recuperate in Managua before assuming command of the San Vicente front in 1986.

Many told stories of Mayo’s exaggerated class hatred with an express resentment toward elite abilities. Mayo punished any perceived arrogance with almost tyrannical assignments that seemed to reward the lowest common denominator. Highly educated or skilled combatants were assigned extra remedial tasks involving manual labor or practicing handwriting to instill a sense of humility and equality within the ranks. The climate under Mayo’s rule approached the re-education experiences suffered by the Chinese and Vietnamese elites and middle classes under Mao and Ho. Among some, this commitment to building a classless society was respected, but others detected a deeper problem.

There were reports of a number of inexplicable events in which the military seemed to have remarkably precise information about FMLN locations and movements, allowing them to inflict severe damage. Mayo increasingly responded to these losses as acts of betrayal. His paranoia became the basis for ever more indiscriminate and brutal “*ajusticiamientos*.” Relatively small or rather unsubstantiated errors were punished with death. Reports emerged detailing scores of internal executions. The first tipping point came when an entire group of returning youths from Mesa Grande to serve in San Vicente were executed under Mayo’s order

⁴⁹⁶ This section relies heavily on the reconstruction of this period by Tom Gibb, (2000: 248-264) as well as interviews with about 10 ex-combatants that were affected directly by the actions of Mayo Sibrián.

as suspected spies. These purges that occurred in 1986 were allegedly investigated by the FMLN high command, but Mayo was only reprimanded and his command would be extended until 1990.

While the executions slowed, they did not end. Over the four year period, at least 300 and as many as 500 FMLN combatants were executed under Mayo's orders in what amounted to the most devastating collapse of moral authority and criminal negligence within the FMLN. The victims openly recounted their experiences as episodes of a longer stream of random violence that they had not yet fully comprehended. It was not simply the number of executions that Mayo and his intelligence network carried out, but it was often the garish brutality with which they were conducted. Victims described acts as horrific as any committed by the right wing death squads, sometimes with intense pressure for collective participation – particularly by close family members.

One woman described her experience as an FPL cook citing many of the benchmarks that dozens of other combatants had mentioned – the suffering of life under constant bombing, *guindas*, and endless work. The story then took a gruesome turn, recounting what amounted to a series of shocking abuses that occurred during her time on the *Chinchontepec* volcano. She lost two children under conditions that appeared to involve unjustified and excessive punishment for petty offenses. Labeled by Mayo's commanders as "enemies of the people," she does not know where they are buried.⁴⁹⁷

She personally witnessed another instance of *ajusticiamiento* that involved a boy working in the encampment kitchen and was found to have given a box of cigarettes and some crackers to a friend. Because no one had any money, he was investigated for theft. The same night the boy was tied to a tree and members of the encampment were obliged to beat him with a club. The woman said that she was told to stab the boy in the throat as he was being hung, but refused. For doing so, she was expelled along with her son from the encampment. Like other families holding similar grievances, she holds the FMLN command responsible. "There were errors. For many people, there now is this thorn. They feel damaged. These are consequences of the war, but there is resentment."

⁴⁹⁷ Interview, Coyol, Tecoluca, April 9, 1998

Another combatant attributed the situation to a shift in the beliefs by the later years that had guided the revolution:

Many people stopped believing in the later years of the war, and simply out of selfishness, various comrades were executed. For example, the sons and daughters that served in the guerrillas, when they visited their parents, they would return with ten or twenty pesos. The parent's would give them something small. But maybe someone did have any money and would report those who did to the commander accusing them of taking bribes from the enemy. Often these allegations were not investigated. There was more selfishness than honesty and it contaminated things. It was the worst mistake the organization could have committed, but we were not following our principles. After the war, many combatants remained a little traumatized by those bad examples, on one hand. On the other hand, there are many comrades that are understanding and do not compare these personal failures with the direction of the revolution [la linea]. There is great resentment among some combatants, but not among the majority of the population. Perhaps there is a generational difference. Many of the parents of these children are not confused because they joined out of conscience, with knowledge of the movement and they are clear about things. But the son or daughter, they dedicated themselves more to the physical and military training, and politically they didn't have the knowledge or preparation of the majority. They were only soldiers, and when soldiers are ordered to risk their life they do it, and sometimes even against their will. And maybe this explains why some lost their way.⁴⁹⁸

Pilar Clímaco, a political organizer for the RN recounted how her family and many of her in-laws were targeted as infiltrators in 1988. Both families had been involved in the revolutionary movement since the early 1970s. One of the women whose name had appeared on the list was in 1998 on the board of directors of CRIPDES. An investigation by the RN into the claims found that there was little basis to them, but by then Pilar's brother had been executed.⁴⁹⁹

Varying accounts persist regarding just what led to the killing of 300-500 FMLN combatants by their own leaders. Most are convinced that infiltration existed to a lesser degree and some of the executions were justified. Some argue that Mayo was the infiltrator, compromised after an early arrest and betrayed the FMLN as a spy for the U.S..

Remarkably, some combatants rationalize Mayo's paranoia and extreme authoritarian methods as an excess of dedication, understandable and even admirable in the context of a dirty war, especially for a commander that seemed to get the job done militarily. In this view, Mayo

⁴⁹⁸ Interview Alvaro Alfaro, San Bartolo, Tecoluca, April 23, 1998.

⁴⁹⁹ Interview, Pilar Clímaco, ASMUR President, San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, Nov. 20, 1998

simply pushed the principles of the revolution to the extreme. Most believed that the vast majority of killings lacked justification.

No formal investigation was conducted of the killings or the negligence within the FMLN central command that permitted Mayo to remain in command of the paracentral zone almost four years after the initial purges in 1986. Privately, some of Mayo's subordinates involved in the killings have attempted to make amends with victim's families, but to little avail. Victims also complain bitterly about unfulfilled promises by FPL leaders to address these directly with the survivor families.

Discussions with a number of those whose experiences were tinged by the psychosis of Mayo Sibrián, revealed a profound anger, humiliation and grief at not knowing where one's son or daughter is buried or the real conditions of their death. It would seem that of the many self-deceptions that were required to assimilate the tremendous sacrifices of choosing revolution, this last one crossed the line. As a result, a notable rift has deepened between the treatment of the revolution as something sacred and the erosion of trust in its historic leaders. One man stated that:

among large segments of the civilian population that is considered the FMLN base in San Vicente and Usulután, they silently hold an accounting of these crimes, and are prepared to present this social debt to the FMLN leadership at a particular moment. They are only holding back out of sympathy for the fragility of the larger project of consolidating the victories achieved in the Peace Accords, but will not actively support the party.⁵⁰⁰

Among the younger generation of combatants, there exists a perception that the secretive way that the Mayo Sibrián period has been covered up may explain why so little space has been created by party leaders for new leaders to ascend. Most remarkable of all, while these errors have not been forgotten or forgiven, there appears to be a higher priority placed on the reconciliation of the past and continuing the hard work of the present.

In 1990, after an investigation by the FMLN high command, Mayo Sibrián was executed for his crimes, although even the alleged indignation and arrogance that he maintained in his final defiance of his commanding officers is recounted with admiring respect by some.

⁵⁰⁰ Interview, Alejandro Valladares, Las Pampas, Dec. 18, 1998

As in 1983, the internal crisis surrounding Mayo Sibrián occurred at moment of surging military capacity within the FMLN as it prepared for the Strategic Counter-Offensive. Leveraging the full capacity of the guerrilla strategy that had seemingly inflated the confidence of the U.S. and Salvadoran officials, the FMLN mounted an unprecedented offensive in November 1989. An estimated 6,000 combatants participated in coordinated assaults on major cities, the most dramatic of which involved a battle that raged for more than a week in the peripheral suburbs surrounding San Salvador. Despite the logistical feat that enabled the attack, the rebels failed once again to ignite the hoped for insurrection and were driven back by a savage bombing of urban neighborhoods.

The offensive cost an estimated 2,000 deaths and as many as 4,000 casualties among the FMLN ranks, as well as almost \$70 million in economic damage (FUSADES 1989; Montoya y Martínez 1990). However, it was the government's decision to execute seven Jesuit priests – the country's leading intellectuals, and their two civilian assistants during the offensive that effectively backed the Cristiani government into a corner. Peace negotiations were the only escape. The urgency of negotiations was stepped up by the FMLN deployment surface to air missiles that were acquired from Nicaragua in 1990. The missiles, which had been available but not used due to fears about U.S. reactions, instantly inflicted heavy damage on the Salvadoran air force. This confluence of tactical realignments forced both sides to the conclusion that the war was unwinnable militarily.

D. EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES DURING THE TRANSITION TO PEACE (1990-1992)

The final years of the war following the 1989 offensive were ones of frenetic political jockeying for post-war position. In all three aspects of the political opportunity structure (land inequality, elite access, and state repression), the period was one of both continuity and change, depending in large part on the path chosen in the 1970s. In the run up to the peace negotiations, the FMLN carried out hundreds of land occupations, altering perhaps more than any moment in the country's history the underlying agrarian structure and the connected social

relations of inequality. However, the impact of the land redistribution varied with the depth of FMLN support on the ground.

The end of the war also signaled the eventual end of U.S. military support, and in turn, the collapse of the Christian Democrats. At one end of the political spectrum, ARENA consolidated its electoral defeat of the Christian Democrats as the dominant political force and rapidly subjected the Salvadoran economy to the shock therapy of structural adjustment. In exchange for the political reforms that would be conceded in the Peace Accords, ARENA ceded to itself the command of the economy and rewarded many party loyalists with the spoils of privatized state assets. In perhaps the most audacious move, Cristiani liquidated the debts of the nationalized banks before selling them to himself and other oligarchs at rock bottom prices.

At the other end of the spectrum, years of planned and unplanned efforts to decentralize authority in zones of FMLN control were taking shape. NGOs and grassroots organizations proliferated and institutional competition for the lion's share of reconstruction funding intensified. A panoply of donor-driven institutions and programs associated with the FMLN pursued a vague notion of constructing a popular alternative economy in insurgent control zones as it prepared to trade bullets for ballots it transitioned to a legal political party.

The middle strata of Salvadoran politics, just like the middle road to social change, proved to be least susceptible to these turns in the political field of power. Inevitably as well, the negotiation of peace would bring about significant changes in the state security forces, curtailing the impunity of these institutions and reducing repression. As such, the principal guarantor of the counter-insurgent solution to collective action would be gone, and the search for a new solution would be found in the redemption of market forces.

1. Land Occupations

Between 1989 and 1993, the FMLN and allied rural organizations moved large numbers of civilians into all corners of the zones under its control to establish the basis for negotiating the transfer of the occupied land from ISTA and the former owners. Between November 1990 and July, 1991, FMLN groups occupied 13,000 hectares of some the best farmland in the country. By March 1992, another 6,000 hectares had been occupied. Within the framework of the peace

negotiations, peasant organizations and the government reached agreements not to dislodge the squatters at the September 1991 peace talks held in New York. On the ground, local organizations with the backing of demobilizing insurgents were defending the occupations.

The massive occupations would enable the FMLN to negotiate these properties under the land transfer program (PTT), which would become the crown jewel of the economic side of the Peace Accords. The first FMLN inventory presented in Feb. 1992, claimed 12,280 properties for a total of 500,000 manzanas (350,000 ha.). This claim represented more than the entire 1980 land reform, was roundly rejected by the government as excessive.⁵⁰¹ The second FMLN inventory (May 1992), listed some 5,821 properties totaling 263,200 ha.. As embargoed and non-negotiable properties were removed, the third FMLN inventory declined to 4,666 properties, equal to at least 210,000 ha. Finally, the government and the FMLN settled on a total of 4,600 parcels, or an area equal to between 122,500-166,250 ha. Of this land, 70,000-113,400 ha. would go to FMLN combatants and supporters. At the same time, peasant organizations under the direction of the FMLN, were occupying some 20,000 ha. of abandoned farms in conflictive zones.

Within the 1992 Peace Accords, the land transfer program (PTT) was viewed as crucial to consolidating the fragile “negotiated peace.” Table 5.8 shows that this latest stage of land reform has redistributed 103,000 ha. of state owned and privately held land to 36,089 ex-combatants of the FMLN and Salvadoran military, as well as civilian supporters of the FMLN.⁵⁰² Like other stages of land reform in El Salvador, the total expected beneficiary population and farm area actually transferred were both substantially lower than planned.

The PTT had the greatest impact in the departments of Cuscatlán, San Vicente and Usulután (10-14% of total departmental land area, the latter two being subject to major land invasions in 1991-92). In San Vicente, total land claimed by the FMLN according to the

⁵⁰¹ No properties were claimed in the departments of Sonsonate or Ahuachapán, but about 75,000 ha. over a third of total area of Chalatenango was claimed. Also, the first inventory included 197 state properties (83 ISTA, and 67 FINATA).

⁵⁰² The U.N. estimated that an average of 3.5 ha would be needed for as many as 47,500 beneficiaries for a total of 166,250 ha. Initial government estimates of available land to be transferred included 34 expropriated farms abandoned during the war and administered by ISTA equal to 17,500 ha. (mostly in San Vicente, and Usulután), 47 large properties identified as “excedente” (or above the legal limit of 245 ha.) totaling 9,100 ha. held by the state (ISTA), 18,900 ha. in land offered for sale to the Land Bank in reconstruction zones, and 14,000 ha located outside reconstruction zones. U.N. (1995) Doc. 2/25812/Add.2, May 25, 1993.

proposed inventory of May, 1992, was 21,785 hectares (8% of total national land claimed). As of 2000, the final PTT total for San Vicente was 17,317 hectares, transferred to an estimated 5,434 beneficiaries.

Table 5.8 Summary of Land Reforms in El Salvador, 1980-1998

	1980 Agrarian Reform	1980 Agrarian Reform	1992 Land Transfer Program		Total Reform⁵⁰³	
	Actual	Actual Corrected⁵⁰⁴	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
Land area affected (ha)	282,486	264,127	166,250	103,363	799,750	367,490
% farm land	21.0	19.6	12.3	7.7	59.7	27.3
Individuals affected	82,698	77,298	47,500	36,089	248,500	113,387
% EAP in agriculture	14.8	13.8	8.5	6.4	44.4	20.2
Ave. farm size (ha)	3.4	3.4	3.5	2.9	3.2	3.4

Far from fulfilling the demands embodied in the initial FMLN inventory of 350,000 ha., the PTT redistribution increased total farmland affected by two decades of land reforms by a

⁵⁰³ Total values for the 1980 Agrarian Reform are obtained by adding the respective Phase I, Phase II and Phase III totals. Totals do not include Decree 839 voluntary transfers of some 10,000 ha after 1989. Net planned impact of Phase II in terms of land is estimated at 270,000 ha., (obtained by subtracting 245 PTT properties greater than 100 ha., equal to 54,000 ha, from the estimated 270,000 ha. of potential Phase II land) (see notes for Table 5.6). Net Phase II beneficiaries of 20,500 are estimated by subtracting 15,500 PTT recipients on large farms from the 36,000 estimated Phase II beneficiaries. The grand total of planned reform beneficiaries of 260,000 sums 60,000 for Phase I, 50,000 for Phase II, 150,000 for Phase III, (and 47,500 for PTT, then subtracting an arbitrary 20,000 for double counting of beneficiaries). The grand total of land affected by all land reforms is 737,248 ha, which sums 247,500 ha for Phase I, 270,000 ha for Phase II, 220,000 ha for Phase III, (and 166,250 for PTT, then subtracting 50,000 ha. for double counting of land parcels).

⁵⁰⁴ FMLN and FAES beneficiaries of the PTT settled or were assigned some 18,359 hectares of ISTA reform farmland, according to the OCTA 3rd PTT Census, pg. 9. To avoid double counting this land, the amount was deducted from the 1980 actual land. Based on 3.4 hectare ave. for the 1980 reform, the land deduction translates into 5,400 individual beneficiaries that are also deducted from the total 1980 affected population.

substantial, if much more modest 7.7%.⁵⁰⁵ The impact of the PTT on land distribution equality is actually less than one might imagine since as much as 20% of the redistributed land was already in possession of the state.⁵⁰⁶ Wood argues that the impact of the PTT was political rather than economic. She contends that, “despite rhetoric to the contrary, neither the government nor the FMLN ever saw land transfer as a measure to redress distributive concerns that had fueled the civil war. Rather, land transfer was intended to facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants and FMLN supporters into the economic and social life of the country” (Wood 1995: 82).

Taken as a whole, Salvadoran land reforms delivered only about half of what had been promised. As much as 60% of all farmland was potentially redistributable, benefiting as many as 248,500 landless and tenant farmers, or 44.5% of the economically active adult population in agriculture in 1980. However, only 113,387 peasants (20.2% of adult 1980 PEA in agriculture) gained access to land totaling about 27% of all farmland (367,000 hectares). The departments of Sonsonate, La Libertad, Ahuachapán, La Paz, San Vicente and Usulután experienced the greatest overall transformation, with between 23-30% of total area redistributed. In these departments we would expect the greatest decline in land inequality. The appendix (Table D.5) shows that this is largely the case, with the exceptions of La Paz and San Vicente, the other departments register the greatest improvements in estimated land inequality between 1961-1998.

The 1998 estimate in Appendix table D.5 suggests that overall land inequality remains high in San Vicente, underscoring the mixed impact of the land reform process. This becomes clearer when looking at the case study municipalities. The political experiences within the three case study municipalities are no better distinguished than by the impact of the land transfer program. While each case represents the logical culmination of a twenty year struggle that began with relatively similar, modest aspirations, the different outcomes are comprehensible by knowing how the paths diverged after different action choices were taken.

⁵⁰⁵ FUSADES (1992: 151), Binford (1994) U.N. *op. cit.*) Elizabeth Wood graciously provided documentation supporting the initial estimates of FMLN and government land inventories.

⁵⁰⁶ ISTA lands identified in the MAG-OCTA, *Tercer Censo Agropecuario del PTT*, April 1997. It is also worth noting that the second FMLN inventory included 46,400 ha. of state owned property. “Tierras Propiedad el Estado que Aparecen en el Inventario del FMLN,” mimeo.

a. Tecoluca

In Tecoluca, the FMLN claimed approximately 15,000 hectares in their second land inventory (April 1992). This represented over 50% of the total municipal surface area. The final PTT land total in Tecoluca was 9,934 hectares. The families of the national oligarchy and regional patronage structure, from Cristiani to Chepe Diablo, were all affected by the reform.

Land occupations in Tecoluca began before 1991, but the majority of repopulations occurred just before and during the official troop demobilization that ended in 1993. The decision was taken by the FMLN command prior to the 1989 offensive that preparations for repatriation of the refugees in exile would begin. According to one investigation, the FPL directed the repopulation to areas in Tecoluca that would be easily negotiable (state lands), prioritized places of origin, and private farms of historic significance (mostly on the volcano) (Fogaroli and Stowell 1995: 33).

In the days leading up to the Peace Accords, a series of repopulations began. Here in Tecoluca, some people arrived in search of land, for the necessity of finding a means of subsistence. Other people were directed by commanders to occupy specific farms. One ex-combatant describes the process:

“In late 1991, there was much noise about the signing of the Peace Accords, and in this moment there were already various resettlements here, with people in San Carlos Lempa, Las Anonas, Los Naranjos, El Guajoyo, although these were relatively few. The massive repopulations began then, guided by the criteria that farms should be occupied as a necessity for negotiation rather than if the people liked it or not. The objective was to return people to their place of origin, but when the signing of the Peace Accords started to look serious, we also tried to occupy vacant lands in order to negotiate the transfer of this land through the PTT. So, throughout the municipality, we tried to occupy the highest number of farms possible. Some people came on their own looking for land, others were sent on orders from the Party.⁵⁰⁷

Given the amount of high quality land that had been abandoned, Tecoluca was a magnet for resettlements of both the right and left that brought non-Tecolucans from at least half of the country's provinces from exile in Honduras and Nicaragua, as well as many that were originally

⁵⁰⁷ Interview, Francisco, Municipal Secretary, Tecoluca, Oct. 9, 1998

from the municipality but displaced at some point.⁵⁰⁸ Some ISTA or FINATA farms were abandoned then resettled by ISTA around 1986.⁵⁰⁹ Other ISTA farms were resettled by both former cooperative members and new people (i.e. los Naranjos, Guajoyo, and Gran Sasso. Many other notorious and prized private farms were also occupied. The social landscape was completely reconfigured with a mix of ex-combatants from both sides, civil patrollers and original ISTA cooperativistas, new FMLN cooperativistas and displaced civilians from far and wide.

One artisan cooperative coordinator in Managua, Jesus Amaya, recounted the challenges of the second attempted repopulation of San Carlos Lempa. At the time, the four artisan cooperatives were generating substantial revenue that helped cover refugee camp expenses, but at least 25% of which was donated to the FMLN. As part of the preparations for preparations from Nicaragua, FMLN leaders announced unilaterally to the cooperative enterprises that had been established in exile that they would be appropriated with the expectation that subsidization of the war effort would continue but that ex-combatants would receive privileged slots for post-war employment. Resentful toward the decision, cooperative leaders resisted and were able to negotiate greater control over the workshops.

Amaya was chosen to scout potential sites of repopulation, spending four months in late 1990 assessing land in the coastal paracentral region. A plan was designed whereby the cooperative members would request incorporation into an existing cooperative located in southern Zacatecoluca, just several kilometers to the west of the real destination of San Carlos. The subterfuge facilitated the reentry and registration of the 300 families from Nicaragua to settle initially at the first site, only then to move quietly with the accompaniment of CRIPDES into San Carlos Lempa and the other communities in the lower Lempa region of Tecoluca.⁵¹⁰

The civilian settler's themselves took the initiative and assumed responsibility for many of the decisions associated with the wave of land takeovers that began in 1990, from deciding which land to occupy, taking the land, identifying the owner and negotiating the terms. Always

⁵⁰⁸ In neighboring Usulután, Wood (2003:182) estimates that cooperatives allied with the FMLN numbering approximately 10,000 claimed 482 properties totaling some 66,500 hectares, or about 32% of the departments total surface area.

⁵⁰⁹ Examples include El Casino, El Salto, El Delirio, Barrio Nuevo, Cañada Arenera, El Pacún

⁵¹⁰ Interview, Jesus "Chungo" Amaya, San Carlos Lempa, March 1999.

with the explicit backing of FMLN military capacity and negotiation with the relevant mass organizations, the repopulation experiences re-invigorated the truncated process of self-governance that had been attempted in the PPLs, transferred to the refugee encampments, then transported and adapted to the construction of community within expansion zones of FMLN influence. Given the reluctance of USAID financed counter-insurgent programs and hostile owners to facilitate in any way these independent resettlement initiatives, ad hoc committees were formed to resolve all economic, social and political aspects of life on the resettled farms. New leaders emerged to lead this process demonstrating the skill and acumen accumulated over years of prior organizing:

The displaced began to repopulate expansion zones in 1986, beginning Chalate and Suchitoto, and that was how CRIPDES was born. Some of us were in Santa Cruz, a cantón near Berlin but many were in Calle Real (San Salvador). I looked into leading a group of 12 to 14 families to repopulate to the cantón of Santa Cruz, in Berlin. I went to talk with CRIPDES and did the procedures and then to Calle Real to talk with families that wanted to come to Santa Cruz. And it was not easy, I had to fight with the soldiers in Berlin because we were entering a conflictive zone full of security checkpoints. Where were we going, they wanted to know, because there was nothing in Santa Cruz except guerrillas and fighting. And it was true, the combat was tremendous, but this did not mean that we were not going to get the people there. The families insisted and we entered. We were there six years before the zone of San Vicente was opened up and we could take this land that we wanted here [Las Anonas, Tecoluca]. In 1991, we came together from Santa Cruz, and it cost us greatly.⁵¹¹

A cooperative organizer with ANTA, Maria Cristina Pena, described how the occupation and settlement of La Florida, a property that like many in Tecoluca had been abandoned, was carried out by a small group that were working on the adjacent cooperative, La Betania 2. The land was taken in 1988, a decision taken after several years of organizing in the zone. Although shots were fired at the surveyors the lots were measured and corn was planted. La Florida's owner, Hector Mariano Salazar, attempted to enter the farm with his tractor to destroy the corn. He was captured by FPL forces in the region and then released on the condition that he lease the land to the new cooperative for four years and pay a \$3,000 fine. Two copies of the signed contract were delivered, one to the cooperative and the other to the FPL commander.

⁵¹¹ Interview, Silverio Mendez Chicas, Las Anonas, Tecoluca April 1998.

In 1991, as the contract was due to end and land occupations were escalating, Maria Cristina was appointed to a joint land negotiation committee, tasked with conducting similar negotiations with other owners to facilitate the transfer their property to insurgent squatters, through the Land Bank established by the Peace Accords. As a woman with little education, she said she would not have expected to find herself driving hard deals with region's landowners. These skills, she reflected, were not ones she aspired to acquire but necessary to survive.⁵¹²

In both cases, as in many others, the FMLN civilian leaders that took charge of the land occupations after a lifetime of prior leadership in cooperative organizing and resistance collective actions of resistance. Upon securing access to land, these repopulation leaders transitioned into cooperative and community organizer roles, following a path that Wood describes as driven by moral commitments that allowed for few alternatives. Similar to the experiences of insurgent cooperativistas in Usulután, "they saw their participation in each stage as a continuation of their insurgent identity, "naturally" arising out of earlier choices and experiences" (Wood 2003: 203)

b. San Ildefonso

In San Ildefonso, much of the land claimed by the FMLN, was never successfully negotiated. Over 5,000 hectares were identified on the April 1992 FMLN inventory for San Ildefonso. In the end, only about 1,500 hectares were effectively included in the PTT program. Unlike the 1980 agrarian reform, some lowland properties were affected.⁵¹³

The lower than expected area affected by PTT reveals the fragility of confidence in the FMLN within expansion zone municipalities like San Ildefonso. The moderating impact of the agrarian reform, FMLN errors toward the cooperatives and a residual level of goodwill toward local landlords all contributed to a hesitation in local organizing that placed significant

⁵¹² Interview, Maria Cristina, La Florida

⁵¹³ San Francisco Lempa, another property partially intervened by FINATA, was claimed by the FMLN on its original inventory, but did not make the final cut.

limitations on property redistribution. San Ildefonso was not uncommon, but perhaps characteristic of the largest share of contested territory of El Salvador where the FMLN was unable to mobilize the support necessary to consolidate the transfer of many claimed farms.

El Castaño, perhaps the hacienda of greatest prestige in the area, best illustrates how the prevailing reservations, fear or lack of readiness resulted in many local landowners getting let off the hook. En El Zaiti, a *caserío* of former colonos located adjacent to the Hacienda El Castaño of Ebelio and Francisco Noboa, included some trained insurgent militia. However, according to one combatant from nearby Los Almendros, El Zaiti was typical of many villages in San Ildefonso, in their ambivalence toward confrontations with former landlords, the longing for the perceived security of pre-war colono tenure and the generally mixed political experience during the war.

In one of the last operations of the civil war, five militia members from El Zaiti were escorting PRTC commander Camilo Turcios from Usulután to Tortugero, but were ambushed near Rio Frio. Turcios, originally from the community of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*, and three militia from El Zaiti were killed in the combat. The PRTC commander explained that this event caused resentment within the community toward both the FMLN and the military, contributing to the deep reservations toward overt political activity that came to define the community.⁵¹⁴ The lack of community activism was decisive in 1992, when he approached the Noboa's to negotiate the transfer of their land. Ebelio Noboa claimed that he was open to selling his farm if the price was right. He claimed he had been losing money grazing some cattle and renting out other parcels. However, he was acutely aware that his colonos in El Zaiti regarded him as a "*buen patrono*," and lacked the confidence or ambition to operate the farm themselves.⁵¹⁵ The PRTC commander agreed that El Zaiti was not organized to pressure the Noboas to sell. Not long after the war, the Noboas were seeking to re-establish the pre-war colono contracts with landless peasants from El Zaiti to tend to the 500 cattle that they moved back onto the property.

The oligarchs and local elites of the *Chinchontepec* volcano and founders of the ARENA party that had banded together behind D'Aubuisson to defend the privileges of a

⁵¹⁴ Interview, Genaro Henríquez, former PRTC commander in Northern San Vicente, May 21, 1998

⁵¹⁵ Interview, Ebelio Noboa, San Ildefonso, May 1998.

subservient labor force and uncontested land rights, watched as the FMLN pried away some of the most prized farms in Tecoluca, San Vicente and Zacatecoluca. On the side of the volcano facing the Jiboa Valley, it was a different story. Few lands were claimed by the FMLN, largely preserving the prewar agrarian balance of power. No land was transferred in the PTT program. In fact, D'Aubuisson and other party elites from the region focused on the relocating peasants loyal to ARENA to contested properties in the Bajo Lempa.⁵¹⁶

2. Institutional Innovation and Competition: NGOs, Mayors, Social Investment Funds

In the final years of the war, both the right and left, insurgents, government officials and donors alike, rapidly constructed or consolidated their preferred institutional network for the post-war period. USAID intensified its efforts to fortify CONARA and MEA in support of mayors, while the other multilateral and bilateral donors funded competing national or local institutions. The World Bank returned to El Salvador and the IDB scaled up its operations during the Cristiani government to underwrite proposed structural adjustment reforms. Sollis argues that, “because of CONARA’s counter-insurgency activities, neither the World Bank nor the Inter-American Development Bank were convinced of its capacity or reputation as a development agency” another social compensation agency was created, the Social Investment Fund (FIS), in June, 1990 (Sollis 1993: 448). Local governments now counted three competing agencies (CONARA, MEA, FIS) that provided somewhat similar services but were accountable to different vested national or international interests.

For its part, the FMLN began the conversion of its base organizations into CSOs and NGOs, which given the past hostility for mayors, became the preferred form of local organization. The fact that each political military organization within the FMLN created its own network of NGOs suggested that the professed unity during the war was less than it seemed and would be tested in the post-war transition to electoral competition. The FPL established the Association for the Cooperation and Communal Development of El Salvador

⁵¹⁶ In a desperate effort to stave off the transfer of all the best farms to the FMLN, D'Aubuisson and other ARENA leaders in the region settled people in Zamora no and Nuevo Manager, in Jiquilisco and Pichiche, Zacatecoluca. In the latter case, some of these families eventually relocated to Rancho Grande in Tecoluca in search of more responsive local organizational support.

(CORDES) as the primary development support organization for its base population and a channel for mainly European funding.⁵¹⁷

CORDES was created in 1988 with two employees, an office within the Catholic University and seed funding from two solidarity organizations in the U.S. and one from Canada. The NGO's motivation was to prepare to execute the FPL's vision of development in the post-war period, although the first two years were overwhelmed with emergency needs of repopulated communities. Perceived as fronts of the FMLN, CORDES offices were broken into and equipment was stolen during the 1989 offensive. CORDES was also shut out of USAID funding, despite early efforts to submit joint proposals through CII, an NGO consortium.⁵¹⁸

With the repopulation of zones such as the lower Lempa valley in Tecoluca and Jiquilisco, CORDES established a strategic regional presence there in 1991 to accompany the resettlements, meet emergency needs and eventually promote development activities. Establishing a base in the village of San Carlos Lempa, CORDES and CRIPDES then coordinated the organization of new communal and productive structures in the zone.⁵¹⁹ The accumulated experiences and leadership of the FMLN base organizations were naturally transferred into the post-war institutional architecture of this and other FMLN controlled zones. Perhaps the paramount goal that distinguished this period from the rest was the defense of the land. CORDES, CRIPDES and by 1994, an FMLN municipal government and a host of other local organizations presided over a panoply of post-war reconstruction needs that began with one fundamentally new feature—one of the most dramatic reversals in agrarian inequality in the country.

⁵¹⁷ The other primary development NGOs created at this time were FASTRAS (ERP), FUNSALPRODESE (PC), ASDI (PRTC), REDES (RN). Together with CORDES, these five organizations managed a project portfolio of more than \$15 million in 1993. Sollis (1993: 12). See Binford (1997, 1999), Cagan and Cagan (1991), Macdonald and Gatehouse (1995) for a similar description of work of *Patronato para el Desarrollo de las Comunidades de Morazán y San Miguel* (PADECOMSM) in northern San Miguel and Morazán, Wood (2003 and 2004) for *Comus* and *Fenacoa* in Usulután, Flint (2003) for *el Comité de Desplazados y Marginados de La Libertad* (CODESMA), and Silber (2004) *Coordinadora de Comunidades y Reconstrucción de Chalatenango* (CCR).

⁵¹⁸ Interview, Salvador Orellana, CORDES founder

⁵¹⁹ CORDES is headquartered in San Salvador, with two other regional offices in La Libertad and Suchitoto. Interview, Emilio Espin, CORDES regional manager, 1998. CRIPDES has five regional organizations, la Corporación Comunal para el Desarrollo Rural (CDR) working in the paracentral region. By 1993-1994, CRIPDES was accompanying 168 communities in nine departments and 32 different municipalities.

The FMLN was not alone in staking out the non-governmental space in anticipation of the reconstruction windfall and post-war contest over political gains. The U.S. international NGOs that had remained in the country scaled up their operations with increased funding from USAID. Some U.S. NGOs were selective in accepting funding from USAID and becoming associated with the counter-insurgency project. Most U.S. international NGOs espoused their independence and political neutrality, but few have refused USAID funding outright. Beginning with the CONARA pacification operation in San Vicente, USAID recruited U.S. NGOs to help. NGOs like World Relief, Project Hope, CARE, Technoserve, the International Rescue Committee jumped on board. Others such as Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, Save the Children, and OEF Foundation were more selective in their relationship with USAID.

The ties and tacit cooperation between U.S. NGOs and the USAID sponsored military and pacification programs represented the cost of doing business in much of Central America. In some cases, U.S. NGOs attempted to maneuver within the surveillance of the embassy to support opposition grassroots organizations. In other cases, the coincidence of interest was unproblematic. Catholic Relief Services and its community development program, CARITAS, have channeled millions in food aid donations from USAID and other donors but have declined to participate in USAID financed CONARA programs that are deemed too political. By contrast, Tom Hawk served as country director for World Vision in Honduras administering USAID funded projects in Honduras before making a natural transition to USAID as head of Municipalities in Action. For his efforts and experience, he was rewarded with the executive director's slot at the revamped FISDL and charged with steering the country's local development initiatives.

Still other U.S. NGOs that were generally opposed to U.S. policy in El Salvador, including Oxfam America, the SHARE Foundation, the Lutheran World Federation and American Friends Service Committee, all refused USAID funding and chose instead to accompany repopulation campaigns led by partner organizations closely aligned with the FMLN. These organizations considered hostile to U.S. goals faced constant harassment, restricted mobility within conflictive zones and insidious efforts to block their projects. This hostility was not always unsubstantiated as such organizations worked closely with a global solidarity network that generated millions of dollars in direct and indirect support for the FMLN.

According to one study of U.S. international NGOs with a presence in El Salvador in the late 1980s, USAID actually preferred NGOs over government line ministries or agencies as instruments for its political-economic strategies. NGOs were viewed as more efficient and less corrupt than the government. They typically worked in areas where the government was absent. They represent a private alternative to state-led development which dovetailed nicely with the goals to privatize much of the public sector and particularly the humanitarian or religious NGOs tended to legitimize the U.S. military presence (Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center 1988: 10). A major difference between the FMLN aligned NGOs and those cooperating with USAID is that the former tended to work with pre-established community organizations while those closer to the government, “supplant, divide, or avoid existing popular organizations” (IHRC 1988: 10).

Perhaps the most influential and well heeled Salvadoran NGO with historic ties to ARENA is FUSADES, the economic think tank created in 1984 and bankrolled by \$156 million in USAID funding over the following ten years (Cuenca 1992; Rosa 1993; Foley 1996). With the exception of FEPADE and several other NGOs which were spun off from FUSADES in 1986 to promote business education, the right was slow to acknowledge the significance of community development NGOs. However, the small family of right wing NGOs were capable of capturing an estimated \$30 million from USAID between 1984 and 1992 (Rosa 1993: 86).

FUSADES half-heartedly launched its own communal association strengthening program (FORTAS) in 1988. FORTAS was designed to capture reconstruction funding, channel technical assistance and strengthen cooperation between private sector organizations and new local development foundations in pro-government communities. As the focus of FORTAS shifted to rural communities, *La Fundación Guadalupe* was founded as a associate of the program in 1993.

The FUSADES manager of the FORTAS program explained that the intent was to organize local and external business expertise to launch new enterprises and provide social assistance in coordination with local government. As a free market proponent, FORTAS was provided only a small operating budget of \$120,000 to coordinate 45 foundations, which reflected its low priority status for FUSADES.⁵²⁰ According to *FundaGuadalupe* founders,

⁵²⁰ Blair puts the estimate of FORTAS Associations as high as 60, however many existed only on paper.

almost no assistance was provided by FUSADES and initial projects simply extended the CONARA tradition of administering donor determined projects (basic infrastructure). The program demonstrated little interest in organizing demand through local community associations. Instead, excessive energy was invested in competition between the Church, the mayor, and the foundation over which institution would inaugurate new public works.⁵²¹ Since many of the NGO's individual members lived in San Salvador and only returned on the weekends to the Guadalupe, the presence of the foundation was barely noticeable to most that lived there. During the war, these areas remained dependent upon government transfers through ISDEM or CONARA.

Beginning with the almost negligible impact of Phase I of the agrarian reform, the cooperative experience in the Jiboa Valley remains weak. Sugar producers in the valley that belonged to service cooperative ACOPARVE, were in crisis due to falling international prices and the accumulated impact of the war. Higher up on the volcano, the Coffee growers Cooperative los Nonualcos was formed in 1988, comprising some 200 mostly smallholding coffee producers cultivating over 800 hectares in Guadalupe and San Pedro Nonualco. Unlike the other five cooperative members of larger federation to which they belong (UCAFES), Los Nonualcos Cooperative did not place any ceiling on the land a member may, permitting what is diplomatically stated as “a greater diversity of owners as members.”⁵²²

The majority of smaller finca owners that are members of the Coop Nonualcos complain that cooperative decision making favors the largest owners.⁵²³ Not unlike many struggling agricultural enterprises in the region, the cooperative reportedly mismanaged a USAID loan awarded in 1988, and the losses were eventually condoned even though large growers, such as Max Menjivar, benefited disproportionately.⁵²⁴ The historic distrust between

⁵²¹ Interview, Emilio Henríquez, FundaGuadalupe President and founder, June 29, 1998 and Padre Leonardo Francisco Rodriguez, parish priest of Guadalupe, July 6, 1998

⁵²² Interview, Victor Mencía, Appropriate Technology International, April 10, 1999. UCAFES is a small USAID and IDB funded federation of 22 coffee cooperatives, including Coop Los Nonualcos, and 4,500 producers. UCAFES operates one of its seven *beneficios* in San Pedro Nonualco.

⁵²³ Interview, cooperative member, Guadalupe, Aug, 1998.

⁵²⁴ Menjivar reportedly accessed a large credit through the program, then lent some back to the cooperative. Although the USAID credit was ultimately forgiven, Menjivar forced the cooperative to pay him back.

large and small producers in the coffee sector of the Jiboa Valley was viewed by some small producers as a formidable obstacle to optimal organizational and marketing decisions from the very outset. The cooperative struggled for a variety of factors, not the least of which has been the low initial level of collective spirit, according to an outside consultant.⁵²⁵

As described earlier in chapter four, the creation of new grassroots and non-governmental entities increased exponentially in the early 1990s as reconstruction money began to pour in. Consequently, NGOs and CSOs of every imaginable stripe rushed into the void. Despite being a relatively new phenomenon, the challenges associated with NGO involvement in local development quickly emerged. Highly sensitive questions regarding NGO presence in El Salvador began to raise doubts about their credibility. Some of the doubts included:

- the ability to be neutral while accepting USAID funding given government and USAID hostility toward “FMLN NGOs,”
- the myriad challenges of moving from humanitarian relief to sustainable and participatory development,
- how NGOs contribute to the general chaos of uncoordinated, duplicative and inefficient development activities
- the unresolved tension between NGOs, mayors and government agencies in local reconstruction projects.⁵²⁶

Overall, these concerns fueled a quiet debate regarding whether NGOs contribute to social and economic development or merely provide a substitute for ineffective or exclusionary government services. By 1991, four ministries and central government agencies, each funded by different foreign aid donors, were operating in nine separate poverty alleviation initiatives in the poorest municipalities (Sollis 1993: 455). By 1993, El Salvador counted some 700 NGOs, most of which had formed after 1985 (Pearce 1999: 64). At the same time, local government was denied any significant coordinating role in reconstruction many programs and this led to

⁵²⁵ Interview, V. Mencía, April 10, 1999

⁵²⁶ This last problem was particularly sensitive in municipalities where the FMLN forced mayors to leave.

widespread duplication of activities, as well as increasing congestion as programs amassed at the community level (Nickson 179; Sollis 1993: 455-456).

3. The legacy of violence

Standing beside the monument that was raised to the six “martyrs of the struggle for land,” at the site of the 1974 massacre in *La Cayetana*, Pablo Anaya, speaks with the conviction of twenty-two years of service to the revolution. His experience began as a delegate of the word and early FPL recruit in *La Cayetana* and ended with coordination of the takeover and resettlement of the properties that once belonged to the Cristianis and the Angulos on the *Chinchontepic* volcano in 1991. His experiences were nothing short of legendary, from four years as personal security to FPL top commander, Marcial, and leading the very first military operations, to having to flee the region in the mid-1980s when the command of Mayo Sibrián questioned the loyalty and took lives of even the families of the FPL founders. At 58, with the payoff of a hectare sized farm where he cultivates beans and corn on the volcano and a small two room house in Nuevo Tehuacán that he shares with his wife and extended family, he offered a reflection on the war that is shared by many ex-FPL:

If I had known what we happened to be getting into, I might not have joined at first. However, one did not know what the war would require of us, only that we knew there was a need to change things, to achieve something, and it was us who were present. We were told to organize for peaceful change, but I am absolutely certain that through peaceful change little would have been achieved. Only with the use of violence, was the space for peaceful participation opened.

The legacy of the violence for El Salvador is obviously viewed differently, depending on one’s experience during the war. Early in the war, some in the Salvadoran private sector spoke openly of the need to kill up to 100,000 people to stabilize the country and possibly restore the pre-1979 status quo ante (Montgomery 1995: 260, Woodward 1985: 185; Paige (1997: 36). Some 5,000 U.S. soldiers entered the country between 1980-1991 to help to carry out this plan as advisors and trainers for the Salvadoran military during the course of the war. Ensnared within the massive compound of what is said to be the largest U.S. embassy in Latin

America, designed to withstand a siege for as long as three months, the U.S. consulate in El Salvador hides a small monument to the 21 U.S. servicemen that were killed in combat there. A similar headstone sits in Arlington cemetery, dedicated at a low key tribute in May, 1996, that simply reads, "*El Salvador 1981-1992. Blessed are the peacemakers. In sacred memory of those who died to bring hope and peace.*"⁵²⁷

The names of a dozen or so U.S. civilians, including the four Cleveland churchwomen commemorated every December 3rd that also were killed in the conflict are not named on either U.S. memorial.⁵²⁸ Until recently, there were not even plans for a monument to the estimated 83,000 Salvadorans, mostly civilians that were in fact killed in the twelve year civil war. Hundreds of thousands more were wounded. One in four was displaced. Virtually no one can say they escaped unaffected.

As deeply personal and polarizing were the competing perspectives of the violence during the 1980s, the Peace Accords signed in January, 1992 officially ended this chapter. Thus began a process in which 15,009 FMLN members, of whom 30% were women, concentrated in 50 designated demobilization points around the country, which were then to further concentrate in 15 verification centers. The 62,000 member Salvadoran armed forces demobilized in 100 locations and then further concentrated into 62 designated positions in the country, places where they would normally be posted during peacetime. In these demobilization camps, nearly 11,000 FMLN combatants surrendered their arms to be destroyed and about 31,000 soldiers would also formally disarm under the oversight of ONUSAL, but their weapons were put in storage. These locations were traditionally in zones where both combatant organizations had the most influence and to some extent, benefited from the trust of the local population. The PTT population, a rough estimate of the number of families in the FMLN base, numbered 36,089, compared with the civil patrollers that totaled another 38,000 combatants. Adversaries that could not defeat each other on the battlefield would attempt to return to a normal life, some living side by side in the same community.

⁵²⁷ Bradley Graham, "Public Honors for Secret Combat: Medals Granted After Acknowledgement of U.S. Role in El Salvador," Washington Post, May 6, 1996.

⁵²⁸ A monument to the deaths of the four U.S. churchwomen is located in Salvadoran department of La Libertad.

The Peace Accords created a Truth Commission that investigated more than 22,000 reported acts of violence that occurred between Jan. 1980 and July 1991 (Betancur et al. 1993). Of these, the Commission registered more than 800 complaints of serious acts of violence attributed to the FMLN, half of which involved extrajudicial executions, with the rest including disappearance and forced recruitment. Political killing of high ranking civilians, mayors and other public officials represented violations of international humanitarian law. However, the vast majority of non-combatant killing was attributed by the Truth Commission to the state security forces and paramilitaries. An amnesty approved by an ARENA controlled legislature has prevented any senior military officers from prosecution for war crimes.

El Salvador is now, and has been for many years, the most violent country within the most violent region of the world in terms of homicides per capita. During the civil war, El Salvador came to have rates up to 400 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. Before the war, the level of violence was already higher than the regional average. In 1974, the Pan-American Health Organization reported that the annual homicide rate in El Salvador was greater than 30 murders for every 100,000 inhabitants, one of the highest levels in the Western Hemisphere, surpassing even countries such as Nicaragua or Colombia.⁵²⁹ In the transition to peace, El Salvador has maintained one of the highest indices of violence on record, with a homicide rate that reached 141 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 1995. Figure 5.3 illustrates the trend in the Salvadoran homicide rate over a thirty year period, typically far exceeding the average homicide rate for all of Latin America (7-12 per 100,000) for the entire time period, a region that has the highest levels of homicide worldwide.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁹ These two countries, for the same period, exhibited a homicide rate of 20 to 25 for every 100,000 inhabitants.

⁵³⁰ The Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) homicide rate is given by Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza (1998) using data from the United Nations World Crime Surveys (www.ifs.univie.ac.at/~uncjin/wcs.html#wcs123). LAC homicide rates range from a low of 5 per 100,000 in Argentina and Costa Rica, to 20 for Mexico and Brazil, to 66 for Colombia. The LAC homicide rate is higher than the U.S. rate of 7, as well as that of both Asia and Africa – at 5.4 and 5.1, respectively. Homicides worldwide have increased steadily from 5-7 per 100,000 between 1971 and the mid-1990s. Salvadoran homicide rates for 1969-1974 are from Pan American Health Organization (PAHO, 1980), for 1977-1991, and from and 1994-1999 are from Cruz, et al (1999). Estimates for 1975-1980 and 1992-1994, are extrapolated from various sources. Homicide rates for the period 1980-1991 are based on yearly estimated totals in Seligson and McElhinny (1996), and therefore differ from the PAHO based yearly estimates published in Cruz (1998)

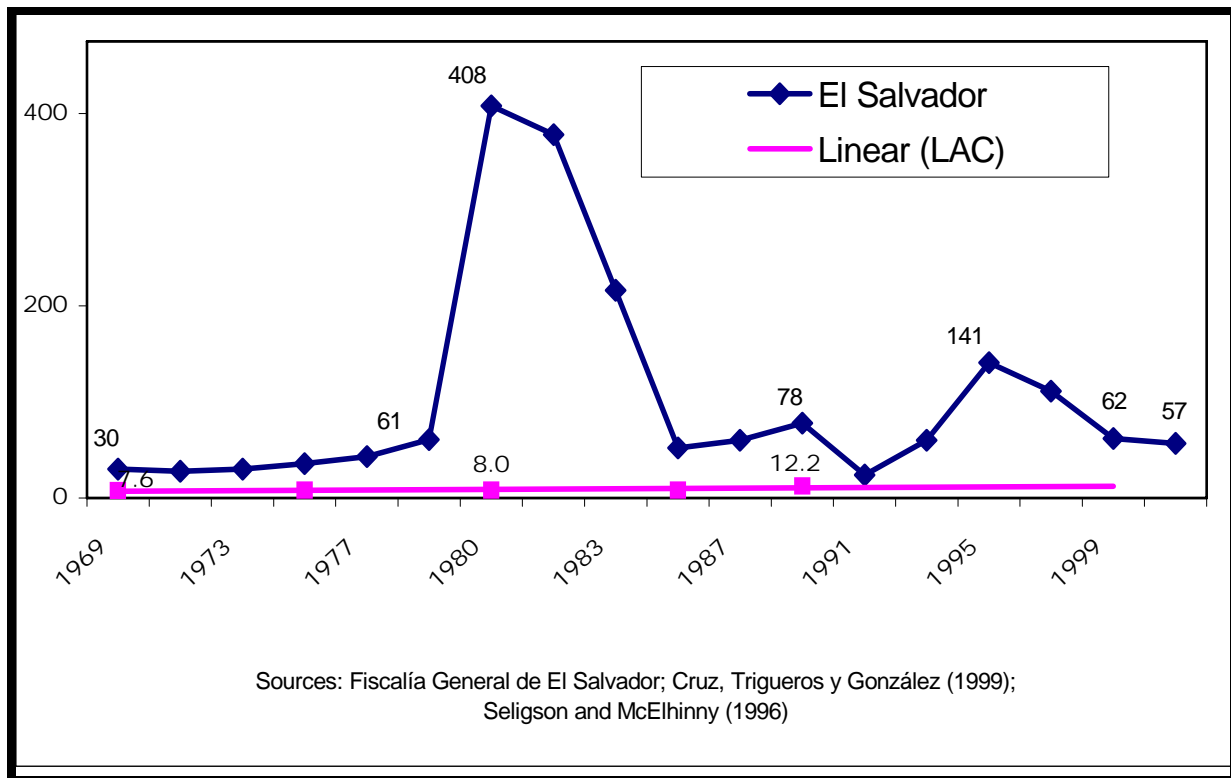


Figure 5.4 Violence in El Salvador and Latin America (Homicides per 100,000 population, 1969-2000)

The relative continuity of high intensity homicide over a span of three decades suggests that in El Salvador the violence during the civil war not only had political roots but was also the product of criminal activity and social violence which has prevailed in the country for some time (Alvarenga 1996; Cruz 1997; González 1997). The negotiations that eventually ended the conflict not only ended open hostilities between the guerrilla and the government, but almost completely eliminated politically motivated violence – not least of which through the transformation and downsizing of the state security forces.⁵³¹ Nevertheless, in the post-war period surprisingly high economic and social violence suggests an inertia of the civil war, although the specific links are not well understood.⁵³²

⁵³¹ Mandated cuts reduced the Armed Forces from 62,000 to 31,000 officers and soldiers. The Treasury and National Police forces were dissolved, although some members of the FMLN, army and old police forces joined the new civil police force.

⁵³² See Holden (2004). Other differences between the various periods of violence in El Salvador, including spatial shifts and comparisons within Central America are explored in McElhinny and Cruz (2002).

In his critique of the U.S. counter-insurgency strategy in El Salvador, Schwartz argues that deeply rooted tendencies in Salvadoran culture ultimately proved remarkably impervious to U.S. intentions to build democracy as a bulwark against the political extremes of the right and left:

Despite the hopes of the low-intensity conflict doctrine, ten years of limited progress and great frustration have revealed the limits of American power. America's conviction that it can create democracy abroad is an illusion, at least in most lands at most times. Because a well-intentioned, but misguided, assumption that techniques, technology and programs alone could fundamentally transform a violent and unjust society into a liberal and democratic one, America perhaps did not consider sufficiently that human character, history, culture, and social structure are highly resistant to outside influence.

This reading of war might lead one to the inaccurate conclusion that the inherent cultural vices of injustice and violence that were exacerbated by "misguided" U.S. foreign policy left the overall Salvadoran population less empowered. Indeed, there is evidence in some communities that supports this conclusion. However, they tend to be found in counter-insurgent communities that were supposedly aligned in some way with the government. Alicia Campos, of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes*, who also experienced the war on the volcano just 5 kilometers from *La Cayetana*, offers a common perspective of the Jiboa Valley communities:

The balance of the war – for the poor, was more poverty and the loss of our beloved family, while the rich take advantage of the humanitarian relief. We are still waiting for the fulfillment of promises of foreign aid made by Cristiani in 1994. There has been nothing so far. Perhaps, only for those who died in combat, not for those who died in their own homes.

State repression facilitated by U.S. hubris had a profound disempowering effect on many communities in the Jiboa Valley, the same effect that the military and its U.S. advisors hoped it would have on FMLN controlled populations. I have argued that because other aspects of the political opportunity structure were different, the effect of violence has had quite the opposite effect on FMLN communities. One of the few FMLN activists in Jiboa Valley, described why things turned out differently there:

Without the foundation of Christian Base Community organization, the occupations of coffee fincas that occurred in the Jiboa Valley were unprepared to weather the blows of landowner sanctioned repression. The coffee owners responded with overwhelming force. What resulted was not an opening for dethroning the patron, but rather a deepened climate of intimidation. This pattern of control still exists today – in sharp contrast to the perceived changes on the other side of the volcano. (Atilio Peraza, Verapáz, Aug. 1998)

In some areas, repression by the military, and the FMLN to a lesser extent, was capable of silencing the clamor for social justice or diverting social energy toward reformist alternatives. In FMLN zones of control, state repression and equally conflictive strategies of survival and resistance played a vital role in the empowerment of insurgent communities. Miguel Cornejo, an FMLN ex-combatant and cooperative president from Los Almendros, San Ildefonso, put it this way:

If there had not been a war, we would not be talking here. You would be talking with someone else, the foreman, the owners,...the *colonos* were never permitted to talk to outsiders.

A woman combatant from Tecoluca described the change not so much in expectations realized, but by the assurance of a more hopeful future for the next generation:

Before the war, everyone looked out only for themselves. Now, no. The war has taught us much. When we fought in the war, we learned much, in the first place, to share with one another, to live together, to suffer together, you see it was something we had to learn I will never forget it. That is what I would like my children to take as an example, for them and other children to take this experience from us to advance themselves. You see, if we suffered it was to learn something. (Venicia Velásquez, FMLN ex-combatant, La Sabana, Tecoluca, April 4, 1998)

Another former combatant and community organizer in San Carlos Lempa describes a peasant culture that is transformed:

I will always struggle so that others will have until God decides to call to heaven or send me hell. I am proud that now they have land, now they are owners of the land, owners of their animals, things that before were very difficult. Before, this here was a hacienda but I had my little plot, my small manzana, and this landowner did almost the impossible to buy my land and remove me from there, converting me into a colono. ‘Sell it to me and just be a colono.’ That was then, there were none of the freedoms that there are now. Now, everyone thinks they can work the land and can have their own life. In the past,

no! Then we worked from 5 in the morning, with a few pieces of tortilla, our *tecomate*, and the *cuma*, because the only thing that 75% to 80% of the workers had was nothing more than their labor power, to go and sell it for a few cents to the patrono. No one cared about your dreams. Now, one's aspirations to improve their lives are everyday closer and that is why we fought and well, we have no regrets. (Jesus "Chungo" Amaya, San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca, Dec. 11, 1998)

Who gets to speak, who gets silenced and under what conditions represent just one dimension of the opposing insurgent and counter-insurgent perspectives. The legacy of violence depends upon the way conflict itself factored into these different empowerment strategies. For the FMLN, empowerment was often a zero-sum process and conflict was considered a central and necessary strategy for confronting inequality. For other communities that were loyal to the government or neutral, empowerment was presented as a positive-sum process in which conflict was considered a cost to be minimized or avoided and inequality could be accommodated.

E. CONCLUSION

Studies of political behavior often assume relatively homogenous interests, and thus similar obstacles to collective action (Evans 1996: 1127). The principal goal of this and the previous chapter have been to illustrate why this would be a seriously flawed assumption for understanding how the civil war has affected the success or failure of post-war development strategies. This narrative of the war in the paracentral zone explicitly challenges the notion of uniform interests and expectations by establishing insurgent (challenging) and counter-insurgent (stabilizing) political experiences of empowerment. The composite images of the three case study communities that represent left, right and middle positions on the revolutionary continuum are far from neat and tidy boxes that are clearly distinguishable and that can be ordered by some set of criteria. However, I contend that the outcome of post-war decentralized development can be explained in large part by examining any one of these three broad historical paths taken to get there.

Having arrived after this rather arduous journey through recent Salvadoran history, it is incumbent to remind the reader of the dilemma of decentralization and the lexicon of empowerment that this narrative has sought to illuminate. The dilemma is that the effectiveness of post-war development, which I contend is heavily oriented by policies of decentralization, depends upon the capacity for collective action to challenge local inequality. Alternatively, decentralization can be a top-down process that recognizes an imposed consensus of self-restraint that in practice emphasizes the expansion of power rather than changing distributional imbalances.

Faced with the circumstances leading up to civil war, Salvadoran peasants had three choices: revolution, reform or reactionary defense of the status quo. The path of revolution involved a contentious challenge to many aspects of highly unequal pre-war agrarian relations. The counter-insurgent path involved a range of efforts to stabilize or to accommodate pre-war norms to a shifting opportunity structure. Individuals and communities made choices prior to the civil war to place them on one of these paths. These choices were influenced by changing conditions of agrarian inequality, access to dissident or ruling elites and the effect of state repression. Initial choices once made were then reinforced by war-time survival strategies that tended to be very different. Insurgent choices were associated with substantially greater bottom-up initiative, and greater dependence on collective action that often encompassed many groups within a transnational mobilization network. Counter-insurgent choices were associated with top-down, elite enforced collective action, greater fragmentation among likeminded groups, and a higher frequency of individualist action. The political experiences acquired while traveling along these separate paths reveal the elements/foundation of empowerment.

Who rebelled and why does this matter? The FMLN failed to defeat the Salvadoran armed forces militarily and it did not galvanize a sufficiently broad political opposition needed to cut the decisive military and electoral support of the U.S.. The FMLN did assemble the most formidable guerrilla army in the hemisphere that controlled up to a third of the country and forced a much better equipped and larger adversary to concede significant political reforms at the negotiating table. However, only a minority took up arms, perhaps no more than 10% of the total Salvadoran population. Most pursued a somewhat neutral course between the two fires, finding refuge perhaps in the cooperative movement or fleeing to the cities or beyond. Nevertheless, given the low success rate of attempted peasant revolutions in Latin America, the

FMLN demonstrated an unlikely political capacity to sustain recruitment of active and passive support as well as transform active opposition into passivity.

In examining the logic behind insurgent, counter-insurgent and neutral choices, I find that beliefs, social networks, organizational capacity, and external factors are not easily reconciled by simple or elegant explanations of rebellion. The evidence presented suggests that a combination of principled motivations, material benefits, family networks and fear enabled the FMLN to overcome these challenges. The seminal revolt at *La Cayetana* shows that the protagonists were motivated by an engrained sense of moral commitment to their neighbors that is somewhat inexplicable by the operating assumptions about Salvadoran culture, and emboldened by an accumulated exposure to liberation theology, opposition political organizers and brief, yet effective prior experiences with collective action.

The unintended outcome of *La Cayetana* and many other political experiences leading to insurgent participation involve networks of reciprocal local social ties that transformed repression into deepened solidarity rather than escape. Having achieved a solid footing as an opposition movement, the traumatic blow of state repression catapulted some peasant movements forward. The absence of these factors that prevented any foundation of collective action also explains why potential peasant sympathy toward the FMLN crumbled in San Ildefonso after initial hard-line policies toward reform cooperative leaders backfired. The explanation of why state repression succeeded in launching a peasant insurgency in Tecoluca but suffocated another in the Jiboa Valley and why FMLN repression snuffed out latent peasant sympathies in San Ildefonso forces us to look beyond mere categories of peasant and landowner to the timing of these decisive events with respect to elite alliances and the formation of internal unity.

Structure, agency and mobilization networks? The political opportunity structure for revolution or counter-revolution, itself the target of strategic innovations of all parties to the conflict, provides a thin explanation of the rise and fall of the insurgency. Structural factors explain only how the conflicts might take shape, not how people will react. There is much more to the story. For those who joined the FMLN, a principled commitment to changing agrarian injustice was an overwhelming attitudinal motivation, reinforced by the confidence derived from what Wood refers to as iterative collective actions. Conversely, the incentives for counter-insurgent participation rested heavily on individualist material benefits, loyalty to

the local elite and fear. The vast majority of Salvadorans were caught somewhere in between these choices. Repression also factored into choices to take any of these three paths, but was probably not as decisive for insurgent choices as some have argued.

Rationalist explanations of the same experiences, such as those associated with Collier's greed-driven rebellion theory, would emphasize that all potential peasant collaborators are and remain conservative in their choices, not persuaded by change in consciousness, but rather a comparison of the net payoff deriving from his/her participation. Materialist interests (or maximized utility) not norms of justice, explained strategic choice regarding whether and how to participate. In turn, the FMLN could only have been motivated by material gains and as the Salvadoran right argued, were little different than criminals.

I find little to support this argument. The inferior material resources and distinct logistical disadvantages of the FMLN forced a greater reliance on principled voluntarism for survival, than the counter-insurgent forces that fought for salaries or other selective benefits. The FMLN had to rely largely on voluntary recruitment and a limited sanction capacity in order to preserve a fragile relationship with their peasant base, the vast majority of whom were only passive collaborators. The Salvadoran armed forces relied more systematically on forced recruitment and coercive relations with peasant communities. FMLN forces and civilian supporters, with a few exceptions, shared rather equitably, the duties and hardships of fighting. This social gap between civilian, civil defense patroller, soldier and officer in counter-insurgent zones tended to remain highly stratified.

The three paths are also distinguished by their preferred mobilization methods. Shifts in the balance of power among elites, both nationally and regionally, prompted strategic, often innovative mobilization tactics by both insurgent and counter-insurgent forces to exploit perceived windows for opportunity and to recruit participation in their respective initiatives. One such innovation was land reform and related constraints placed on the agrarian oligarchy by the Christian Democrats as a safety valve to bleed off the pressure of accumulated rural grievances. Another was the combination of indiscriminate repression and the resurrection of municipal authority within civic pacification programs by the Salvadoran military to manipulate the perceived costs and benefits of choosing insurgency. A third innovation was the civilian-combatant alliance that was deftly employed by the FMLN to lower the costs of insurgent participation by offering a menu of options, to adapt the concept of mass

organizations in the context of war, and to inevitably experiment with decentralized self-governance from which the development NGO eventually emerged. Each tactical innovation was a reaction to competing efforts to pry open or slam shut the political opportunity structure for rebellion.

On one hand, the sheer scope, intensity and duration of the conflict forced the protagonist organizations to expand mobilization networks and on the other hand to decentralize their insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization strategies. Both insurgent and counter-insurgent networks established sophisticated alliances between peripheral, metropolitan and international actors. However, these networks differed in the level of centralized authority over how resources were allocated or the menu of actions that could be taken. They also differed in strength or weakness of within-group ties that resulted from participation, as well as range of cross-class ties that each attempted to achieve.

Both insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies were organized initially as hierarchies to overcome collective action problems. The FMLN, the military and government reform agencies under Duarte all relied on different mixes of coercion, clientelism and voluntarism to mobilize supporters. However, the reality of vertical and horizontal ties between elites and base was substantively different.

Within areas controlled by the FMLN, despite tremendous hardships, empowerment strategies challenged pre-war agrarian relations and eroded the edifice of attitudes, beliefs and actions that sustained inequality. The FMLN ability to tap into and expand a reservoir of principled voluntarism among its supporters allowed the empowerment strategy to move over time from a “hierarchical” strategy for solving collective action problems to a more social norm oriented “community” strategy that prevailed within CEBs and rural unions before the war. Within-group ties tended to be strong, although insurgent tactics alienated most prominent elites and thus limited the extent of alliances to the working class and marginal elites within the country. Internationally, the FMLN established solid alliances with a grassroots solidarity movement and socialist government and party leaders throughout the world.

In contrast to insurgent areas of control, the relative absence of pre-existing institutions or popular disposition to assume the risks of counter-insurgent participation forced the military and the government to rely ever more extensively on coercion and selective benefits. In government controlled areas, pre-war agrarian relations were adapted by counter-insurgent

empowerment strategies that tended to fluctuate between “hierarchy” and “contract” solutions to the collective action problem. In other words, a negotiated participation was attempted through policies that targeted the costs and benefits of action or inaction, but state sponsored violence insured compliance with any deal. Although the counter-insurgent mobilization network included private sector interests and peasants, the internal cohesion of rural poor communities associated with the government was generally less stable than insurgent ones.

In areas that were contested by both sides, both empowerment strategies failed to alter a resilient preference for the perceived middle road offered by the Christian Democrats. However, the inability of the PDC government to implement its proposed agenda weakened its ultimate appeal among both rural constituents and the U.S. government. Even before the U.S. switched horses to back ARENA, mobilization networks of communities allied with the Christian Democrats tended to be fragmented within the country and within organizations. The PDC failed to divide the progressive business elite from the more intransigent agrarian elite, so counted few private sector allies in its coalition. Finally, the transnational scope of the PDC mobilization network was more narrow given its dependence on the U.S..

Thus a key distinction between these empowerment strategies was that in the FMLN experience, the eventual decentralization of power in areas of control provided for greater local autonomy, and actions to disrupt and transform pre-war agrarian relations were often unplanned and initiated from the bottom-up, while the counter-insurgent empowerment strategies aimed at stabilizing agrarian inequality employed by the military and government remained a highly contrived, top-down, and imposed delegation of responsibility with little transfer of actual power. In both approaches, space was created for local institutional innovations to emerge that set the stage for competing patterns of post-war development.

Framing: The FMLN framed its struggle with the symbology of social justice, emphasizing ideals of equity, mutual respect, human rights, participation, accountability and cooperation as the vague socialist principals that would guide the building of a revolutionary society. Among supporters, FMLN combatants were endowed with a “mística” of discipline, creativity, intelligence, honesty, and determination in the face of a militarily superior adversary and its collaborators. This image was tarnished by notable errors and internal violence that was caused in some part by the vulnerabilities associated with FMLN’s vertical yet decentralized decision making structure. The mirror image was used to frame the government and the

Salvadoran Armed Forces, with emphasis on impunity and the irrational defense of agrarian inequality as a failed development philosophy.

The hard-liners on the Salvadoran right asserted the countervailing belief that the FMLN were criminals and terrorists who planned to expropriate all private property, outlaw religion, enslave children and the elderly. This anti-communist propaganda, espoused also in the conservative church, deeply penetrated popular rural beliefs. The complementary framing of pre-war El Salvador as orderly and progressing when guided by the benevolent elite ethic of hard work has found fewer believers among the poor.

The soft counter-insurgent discourse focused on a populist, gradualist and non-violent middle road that rested on a modest reformist agenda that in the end was close to what the FMLN had to settle for.

The battle to frame the insurgent or counter-insurgent actions offered competing cures for a sick Salvadoran culture. The medicine prescribed by the U.S. was northern democracy and gradual reforms. The hard-line right prescribed a heavy dose of repression and a return to the pre-1979 agrarian status quo. The FMLN prescribed a radical redistribution of property rights and with it, the reordering of national values toward socialism.

Summary of case study characteristics: Individuals and communities associated with FMLN control during the war, having chosen insurgent roles, were exposed more systematically to an empowerment strategy that contested prevailing inequities during the war. It is no small fact that land inequality was transformed in revolutionary strongholds such as Tecoluca, redistributing over 50% of total farmland. With this asset redistribution and the traditional authority of the landlords and the National Guard were all challenged and transformed, not only by theoretical discussions, but by and practical experiences of collective action based on principled equality. Individuals and communities associated with government/military control, chose counter-insurgent roles and were also mobilized, but to defend a challenge to the status quo. It is no surprise then that the war effectively redistributed no land in places like the Jiboa Valley. Here, traditional authority between peasant and lord was left intact. Finally, a middle category of experience did not formally choose either insurgency or counter-insurgency, instead opting for any means of viable neutrality. In San Ildefonso, communities such as these had their hopes raised by the 1980 land reform which loosened the yoke of landholder control but failed to organize any viable alternative. Although this third

group may have been mobilized periodically by both the FMLN and GOES forces (what I refer to as soft counter-insurgency), they were most clearly exposed to non-contestation strategies of neutrality. I argue that rooted in these types of wartime political experiences, counter-insurgency roles will tend to be associated with preferences for accommodative empowerment by invitation strategies, while insurgent roles will tend to prefer a empowerment through conflict strategy.

When the political war ended in 1992, the experiences that distinguished those individuals and communities that rebelled, resisted or stayed neutral would be so profoundly rooted that they would shape the expectations and behaviors of a generation of Salvadorans that came of age in these years. For better or worse, these political wartime experiences are the decisive attributes of local development in most conflictive rural communities today.

VI. CHAPTER SIX: THE POST-WAR POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR DECENTRALIZATION (1992-1998)

The political and economic implications of the Peace Accords triggered a profound recomposition within the insurgent and counter-insurgent political movements and their respective mobilization networks. No political party or economic interest group was unaffected. In tracing these political and economic shifts, I argue that the respective realignment of elites within the two contending political movements played out quite differently. This difference is no more visible than in how local actors were included. The trends in political competition, the performance of the economy and the declining importance of the agrarian sector also speak to features of empowerment at the societal level in the areas of political stability, accountability and equity.

To end the war, ARENA traded political concessions to the FMLN in return for control over the economy. The economic reform process prioritized a massive redistribution of state assets and a shift in investment away from the rural economy. The declining dependence on the agrarian export sector exacerbated political divisions in the ruling party and its rightwing coalition, particularly among the disenfranchised landlords that hoped to recover land lost to the FMLN. Modest economic gains, fueled in part by external cooperation and remittances, have lowered poverty but the benefits of growth and investment were shared unevenly, reflected by the extremely high level of post-war inequality. The restoration of civil authority over the military meant that enforcing the priorities of the party would require a more diverse set of collective action strategies. On both counts, the segment of the Salvadoran oligarchy most opposed to democratization was weakened. Decentralization was viewed by ARENA as means to both expedite the privatization of the state and to stabilize its ruling coalition through the distribution of new selective benefits to ascendant party elites but also to the descendent agrarian elite that controlled many rural municipalities by the war's end.

The FMLN ceded control of the economy in exchange for political reforms and an economic reinsertion package for ex-combatants. Impressive electoral gains, increasingly dependent upon urban mobilization, have secured the FMLN's place as the principal opposition

party, but at the same time have triggered recurrent internal divisions over political strategy. Lacking any legislative leverage before 2000 and failing to win the Presidency have severely limited the FMLN's ability to advance alternative economic policies in the post-war period, or to offer viable rural development options in particular. Absent the same normative incentives and institutional allies (e.g. the Catholic Church, strong mass organizations) to rally collective action by its base as during the war, the FMLN has also had to cede greater autonomy to new local actors (NGOs, municipal and community authorities) in order to shore up its own mobilization network. Decentralization and local economic development initiatives have provided the means for reinventing the principled incentives for collective action during the war and for channeling significant resources to local actors as a platform to mount contentious challenges at the national level.

While both FMLN and ARENA have incorporated local actors into their post-war mobilization networks as a way of adapting to shifts in the political opportunity structure, these insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies share some similarities but display many differences. Both parties promoted decentralization in response to a transition between new and old elites. However, the shift was largely horizontal for ARENA – transferring control from one segment of the oligarchy to another. For ARENA, the space opened for local actors was minimal and contingent – consistent with centuries-old patron-client tradition in El Salvador. For the FMLN, the shift was vertical. Local actors have opened the space for themselves in a process that has been both expansive and spontaneous – rupturing in some localities the exclusionary pattern of development.

In this chapter, I step back from the regional analysis to lay out three macro-linkages between post-war shifts in the political opportunity structure, decentralization and the respective insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies. These linkages are: 1) Decentralization began to gain national traction only when the FMLN began to consolidate electoral gains, which have improved the accountability of legislative and municipal institutions. Local processes of empowerment have continued all along in FMLN areas of influence locally, upon which national gains by the FMLN were contingent; 2) Decentralization transferred power to local processes embedded within a rural economy in decline, lowering expectations for economic success; 3) Inequality, especially land inequality, remains very high nationally although exceptions exist in areas of FMLN influence. Inequality is associated with the highly visible instances of political

capture at the national level, primarily as a mechanism to maintain stability within the ruling coalition. Decentralization is not likely to work under these national conditions, except in places where the national pattern of inequality has been disrupted.

The chapter will be organized in two sections. In first section, I provide an overview of the key political and economic shifts in the structure of political opportunity for decentralization during the post-war period (1992 forward) - one dominated by ARENA governance at the national level but increasingly contested by an opposition FMLN party at both the local level. I focus here on the instability of elite alignments provoked by the Peace Accords, electoral gains by the FMLN, the demobilization of key allies such as the Catholic Church and the military, and the consequent dispersal or concentration in elite access. In section two, a summary of available data and my own household survey analysis show unequivocally that income and land inequality have persisted in the post-war period and the rural livelihoods have declined. This evidence suggests that the capacity for collective action may be more important than ever for post-war decentralized rural development.

A. SHIFTS IN THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE: 1992-1998

The Peace Accords enshrined an unprecedented democratic bargain in El Salvador. The FMLN traded economic goals of broadly redistributive, socialist state-led development in exchange for guaranteed political franchise. The ruling ARENA leadership conceded monopoly control of political power in exchange for political stability and the acceptance of accelerated economic liberalization. The international finance community gained the benefits of regional peace – clearing an important obstacle to the implementation of neoliberal structural adjustment reforms throughout Latin America, in exchange for \$1 billion in reconstruction credits and grants. ARENA got the better end of the deal, reflected in two decades of uninterrupted control of the Presidency. However, each aspect of the compromise reflects a significant realignment among elites within the respective parties to the peace negotiations.

With neither side able to win the war militarily and the winds of political change foreclosing future patronage, the FMLN and modernizing forces within the government settled

for second best outcomes and negotiated to end the war politically.⁵³³ The balance of power between the FMLN and the ARENA-led Salvadoran government was clearly influenced by political swings in the U.S. and Europe, which anticipated the collapse of the Soviet bloc.⁵³⁴ The first Bush administration (1988-1992) had signaled its preference for a negotiated resolution to the war, suggesting lower future funding. The decline of socialist bloc in Europe combined with the electoral defeat of the Nicaraguan FSLN in 1990, set certain limits to both insurgent and counter-insurgent strategies to pursue the war.⁵³⁵ Both shifts signaled political realignments among the principal benefactors of the conflict that reshaped the political opportunity for negotiated settlement to the civil war.

The FMLN moved away from a Hierarchy collective action strategy of hegemonic insistence on military victory and the establishment of a socialist state to a contract bargaining strategy over the rules of post-war political competition. Socio-economic demands became secondary to the re-integration package for FMLN ex-combatants, political reforms and the transformation of the security forces.⁵³⁶ ARENA defied the hardliners that had founded the party to gamble future political and economic security on the ability to deliver peace with as few structural concessions as possible. Land transfer represented the most contentious economic issue separating the two sides and the final agreement left the issue conveniently vague.⁵³⁷

⁵³³ The recounting of the peace negotiations here is a synthesis of more detailed accounts, resting on Gibb and Smyth (1990), Karl (1992) Stanley (1996), Byrne (1996), Wood (2000), ONUSAL (1995).

⁵³⁴ Smyth (1992) argues that “the FMLN's transition began as a direct result of changes in the Soviet Union. Although by the late 1980s the FMLN was not dependent on the Soviet bloc to continue fighting, the insurgency would have needed direct foreign aid if they had ever taken power by force. But as early as 1986, the reform government of Mikhail Gorbachev communicated to the FMLN that it favored a negotiated settlement and would not finance a new leftist government.”

⁵³⁵ The fact that the FSLN turned over power without violence allayed fears among some in the Salvadoran private sector that negotiations with the FMLN would backslide into political instability.

⁵³⁶ Gibb and Smyth (1990) The FMLN was formally registered as a legal political party on Dec. 15, 1992 and its members elected a 15 member political directorate one week later.

⁵³⁷ Wood (1995: 46) states that the FMLN agreed to respect existing tenancy in conflictive areas as an interim measure during which land would be transferred to ex-combatants and civilian supporters. However, specifics around land redistribution and what constituted “conflicted zones” were left intentionally vague, a problem that dramatically delay the land transfer process in the following years.

Significant concessions were made on both sides to end the conflict and the final agreement reshaped the political opportunity structure for the foreseeable future.⁵³⁸ Both the peace agreement itself and the implementation of the reconstruction program for which it called, involved both protagonists adapting their wartime empowerment strategies to the more complex post-war terrain.

The Peace Accords comprised a strategic bargain between the elite representatives of the revolutionary FMLN and what Wood refers to as the “agrarian-financial-industrial” segment of the business community, represented by ARENA. In return for the extension of political franchise to the FMLN, and with it the expansion of democracy, command over the deep restructuring of the economy along the lines of the Washington Consensus reforms was ceded to ARENA.⁵³⁹ The January 1992 bargain that ended the conflict represented the basis for a fundamental reordering of Salvadoran society, both politically and economically.

Specifically, the FMLN settled for a gradual demobilization of its armed fighters in exchange for the disbanding of the National Guard, the civil defense patrols, the National Police and the Treasury Police, the regulation of private security forces and for partial control over the newly created police force.⁵⁴⁰ An Ad Hoc Commission of three Salvadoran civilians was charged with making recommendations for purging the officer’s corps of the Armed Forces of the worst human rights violators. The significance of the elimination of the most notoriously repressive elements of the state security forces cannot be understated in the insurgent expectations that post-war political competition free from violence would inevitably favor them.

That optimism was tempered by a tenuous period of intermittent political violence during the first years of peace. Repression and intimidation associated with right wing parties, particularly during electoral campaigns, persisted in stoking a climate of fear that influences rural

⁵³⁸ The FMLN was legalized as a political party, a new police force was established, a human rights ombudsman and Supreme Electoral Council were created. Judicial reforms included the election of the Attorney General.

⁵³⁹ The government’s economic policies were considered beyond the scope of the Peace Accords. As noted in the previous chapter, structural adjustment began prior to 1989. A cycle of stabilization – expansion reform policies were attempted during the war under IMF and U.S. pressure, although the U.S. grew frustrated with the Christian Democrats unwillingness to impose painful austerity reforms. See Rosa (1993) and Segovia (1995)

⁵⁴⁰ Stanley (1995). The FMLN dropped their demand for the integration of the two armed forces. A quota of 20% each was established for ex-FMLN guerrillas and ex-National Police (after clearance) to join the National Civilian Police.

voters to continue supporting status quo leaders.⁵⁴¹ Threats of post-electoral violence and uncertainty over the implementation of the peace accords were deciding factors in the 1994 electoral outcome – the first in which the FMLN would participate as a legal party. According to Stahler-Sholk, “during the last two months of the campaign, the television airwaves were saturated by ads that featured gruesome pictures of wartime destruction warning that a vote for the FMLN would mean a return to the past” (Stahler-Sholk 1995). Polls showed that rural voters, which constituted a majority of the electorate, clearly placed threats of political violence and law and order above land reform and other economic demands when casting their ballots in the 1994 presidential election. Even some top FMLN officials thought that a victory by their party could endanger the country’s stability (Vickers and Spence 1992). In anticipation of this outcome, Wantchekon argues that the FMLN coalition with Christian Democrats and the National Revolutionary Movement decided not to run competitively (in the presidential election), but instead to favor deal making on key issues such as state building and land reform.

The threat of violence by ARENA was quite real. According to one report, “the U.N. documented the violent deaths of fifteen (FMLN) candidates and campaign workers in the three months prior to the vote. At least 32 FMLN members have been assassinated since the cease fire went into effect on February 1, 1992.” From 1992 to 1994 six top ranked leaders of the FMLN were assassinated by right-wing death squads.⁵⁴² Episodes of vigilante justice also surfaced periodically, but most were quickly contained.⁵⁴³ In general, the level of politically motivated violence and fear has steadily diminished with the restructuring and downsizing of state security forces.

⁵⁴¹ Political immunity granted by President Cristiani as a condition for the Peace Accords has prevented any high ranking military or political leaders of the right or left from being prosecuted for war crimes. Roberto D’Aubuisson died in 1992 and many of the original death squad leaders have retired to the U.S. See for example, Phillips (2003).

⁵⁴² April 7, 1994 report by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, CISPES, cited in Wantchekon, 1999: 9-10). At least four ARENA affiliated persons were also killed in the run-up to the 1994 election.

⁵⁴³ One such instance was the “sombra negra” (black shadow) that appeared and began executing gang members and local thieves in San Miguel in 1995. Some rural repopulated communities of ex-combatants publicly advertise security measures, “thieves will be shot.” A great deal of attention is placed on been gang retaliation violence, which for El Salvador has become a peculiar form of public “lynchings” that have occurred more broadly in other countries (Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil).

However, an extremely high rate of post-war homicide rates and criminal victimization suggests that violence continues to shape the political opportunity structure – albeit in a manner that is different than the past. Security has now become a non-ideological public good, and an organizational priority in many communities.⁵⁴⁴ The new civilian police force, which was constituted from ex-combatant applicants from both sides, ex-national police and new civilian trained officers, has often been viewed as too weak in the face of post-war criminal and social violence. The relative incompetence of law enforcement agencies to reduce violent crime has permitted “*mano dura*” policies by ARENA that have had little effect on improving security, but has strengthened their political popularity by asserting FMLN association with crime or oversimplifying the problem as a gang violence issue. At the same time, a reduced military repressive capacity has enabled the opening of political space for the FMLN to survive and expand.

If the military has ceased to be repressive arm of the ruling elite, the media has compensated for this retreat by intensifying a campaign of disinformation and defamation attacks against the FMLN. For the most part, the Salvadoran media has demonstrated a greater independence and balance. However, contentious legislative proposals by FMLN officials or sympathetic civil society organizations are still frequently labeled as “communist”, and disruptive strategies are painted as extreme social deviance. Intolerance still permeates much of the journalistic discourse.⁵⁴⁵

The two leading newspapers have reduced the steady stream of sensationalist coverage of the FMLN, and have offered a more critical view of ARENA and formerly untouchable icons of the elite. Pro-FMLN editorial writers now occupy a token space on the opinion pages. During

⁵⁴⁴ Anecdotal evidence of the links between right wing politicians with the largest private security firms, particularly among ex-officials of the state security bureaucracy, suggest some continuation of the “protection racket” strategy described by Stanley (1995).

⁵⁴⁵ Informal remarks and public advertisements during recent campaigns constantly remind any observer of the permanent campaign by ARENA hard-line leaders to sow fear among potential FMLN supporters. The ARENA party theme song still literally calls for “burying the reds in their tombs”. ANEP’s anti-kidnapping ads in 1998 were directed exclusively at the FMLN with symbolically infused ads having black and red backgrounds. Each electoral campaign predictably features highly suggestive media coverage that associates FMLN leaders with past kidnappings, the “discovery” of clandestine weapons stocks, reckless economic proposals and general authoritarian orientations. The tendency for campaign coverage to foment intolerance for the opposition parties by associating the prospect of wider, more effective political participation with the sensationalized threat of socio-political violence, lead one of the most widely respected political experts, Hector Dada Hirezi, to label the major media organizations as “*cloacas*,” or sewage drain pipes. (radio interview, YSUCA, Feb 18, 2000).

the recent elections for president and for mayors and congressional deputies, both major newspapers have given unprecedented coverage to opposition candidates. This represents a significant advance over the systematic press distortion of both the factual events of the war and the censored analysis of the most extreme human rights violations.⁵⁴⁶

These improvements aside, during key political moments there occurs an inevitable retrogression back to slanted reporting of the past. In an unexceptional editorial entitled, “*We Don’t Need That “Participation,”*” published during the electoral mobilization prior to the 1999 Presidential campaign, El Salvador’s most conservative newspaper declared, “*The experiences of the ‘participatory’ model are very negative, beginning with the corporative experiment of the Fascists to the Communist soviets that served as the instrument to crush all liberty in the former Soviet Union.*”⁵⁴⁷

The Communist symbolism never loses significance in demonizing the threat of an FMLN victory, embodied as it is by substantial part of its “rank and file [that] continue believing in the Soviet Union, in the brotherhood of socialist nations, in the sharing out of riches, in the collectivization of the land and in the walls where executions take place as part of “social purification.”⁵⁴⁸ The left leaning Jesuit publication *Proceso* argues that there is a link between this media’s manipulation of fear and its intended effect on citizen participation. “What have not entirely disappeared are the subjective imprints of terror on the deepest collective consciousness of Salvadorans. This translates into social paralysis and a reluctance to take risks and commit oneself publicly...as a consequence, civil society does not play its proper role in the Salvadoran transition.”⁵⁴⁹

Crucial to this campaign is the neutralizing of any attribution of discontent to structural injustice. The post-war media have adapted the predominant wartime strategy of the military

⁵⁴⁶ See Truth Commission Report (1993: 54), Annex II, for a summary of wartime news analysis. It is also worth mentioning that television news coverage has improved largely due to the popularity of progressive TV journalism of Mauricio Funes, which until 2004, served as the most watched news commentator of TV12. Recent kidnapping of the owner of TV12, as well as Funes own political missteps, have played a hand in the firing of Funes by the Mexican owners of TV12.

⁵⁴⁷ *El Diario de Hoy*, Jan. 21, 1999

⁵⁴⁸ *El Diario de Hoy*, March 14, 2000, as cited in *Proceso*, March 22, 2000.

⁵⁴⁹ *Proceso*, 767, July 23, 1997.

press relations agency, characterized in news analysis that was published in the late 1980s. “The growing misery is attributed more today to the war than to structural injustice, and the war is attributed more to the FMLN than to the armed forces or to the United States. Rational analysis of the war, of its causes and effects, shows the enormous responsibility of the business class, the international economic order, U.S. interests, etc. But the emotional impact, orchestrated by the major media, shows sabotage, social disorder and other actions attributed to the FMLN as the principal causes of the growing misery.”⁵⁵⁰ Operating on these same principles, the Salvadoran media have played an active role in campaigns to frighten would be FMLN voters into quiescence.⁵⁵¹

Typically uncontested by alternative political information, such campaigns are often effective in neutralizing the undecided. The Catholic Church represented one alternative information source that was crucial to the success of opposition movements in the past. In the post-war period, the appointment by the Vatican of a conservative archbishop in 1995, Cardinal Francisco Saenz Lacalle, has effectively neutralized the institutional Catholic Church as a catalyst for social mobilization. The remnants of the popular church that survived the targeted violence of the war, have continued in the liberation theology tradition at the margins of an institution that now sides unabashedly with ARENA.⁵⁵² The effect has been to diminish and concentrate the elite linkages between clergy, catequists, lay workers within those regions that were historically associated with this tradition in the 1970s – most of which are also zones of FMLN governance at the local level. In contrast, the influence of the Catholic institutional networks, particularly among the more conservative seminarians serving in rural areas, has reverted back to strictly sacramental priorities that provide silent endorsement of executive

⁵⁵⁰ “Editorial: Recrudescimiento de la violencia en El Salvador,” *Estudios Centroamericanos* 480 (Oct. 1988), 874-876.

⁵⁵¹ In the 2004 U.S. Presidential campaign, ARENA television ads fed the rumor that the US would expel the two million Salvadorans living in (and remit nearly 15% of the Salvadoran GDP) if the FMLN won. The TV ad showed a woman opening an envelope from the USA and reading a letter from her son, “Sorry mom, if the FMLN wins, this will be your last money coming from the USA.”

⁵⁵² The same is true for the respective elements of the Lutheran, Baptist and Episcopal churches that were and continue to identify with contentious issues of human liberation

prerogative on most policy matters. The proliferation of evangelical churches has only reinforced a religious preference for spiritual fervor and political acquiescence.⁵⁵³

Against these considerable odds, the FMLN has struggled to consolidate itself politically. In the 1994 elections, ARENA candidate, Armando Calderón Sol defeated FMLN coalition candidate Ruben Zamora, winning 49% of the national vote (650,000 votes), 39 of the 84 seats in the national assembly and 211 of the 262 municipal governments (50 more than 1991). The FMLN coalition received 25% of the presidential vote (331,000 votes), winning 21 seats in the assembly, and only 15 municipal governments.⁵⁵⁴ The Christian Democrats and PCN won 16.2% and 5.4% of the vote, respectively. Although the FMLN only contested 206 municipalities, the left suffered an undeniable defeat. If the FMLN and CD had run in coalition in all municipalities, they would have won between 50 and 60 (See Tables G.1 – G.6 in Appendix for summary of municipal and legislative election results from 1994-2003) (Lungo 1995: 33; Montgomery 1995: 265).

The FMLN quickly faced internal divisions, as the unity that permitted unprecedented levels of coordinated political-military action during the war came unglued. The RN and ERP, the two least ideologically bound factions of the FMLN during the war, distanced themselves from the positions of principled opposition adopted toward ARENA and the Salvadoran private sector. The ERP formally declared itself a social democratic party in early 1994 and after a series of disputes, withdrew from FMLN along with the RN later that year to form the Democratic Party (PD). The PD then shocked many by breaking party unity to vote for an ARENA candidate for Assembly President, in exchange for a PD slot as Assembly Board Vice-President. Several months later, the PD then signed the San Andrés Pact, a deal which obliged little by the government but delivered the crucial PD votes to pass an increase in the value added

⁵⁵³ Estimates of the evangelical share of the spiritual market vary widely depending on the source (between 5-20% of the total population). Worth noting are two attempts by evangelical movements to spawn political parties for the 1994 elections, but have since disappeared.

⁵⁵⁴ The March 1994 “elections of the century” were the first in El Salvador’s history where a full range of political parties participated legally, although serious registration anomalies cost the FMLN as many as 200,000 votes (Spence, Dye and Vickers, 1994). ARENA won 68.4% of the second round runoff vote. Elections for president, deputies and mayors all coincided in 1994. Presidents are elected by a majority runoff system. A second round is required for the two top candidates if a simple majority is not reached by anyone in the first round.

tax from 10% to 13%.⁵⁵⁵ In reaction to expulsion from the FMLN, the ERP and RN responded, "We reject the contentious and anti-system attitudes that calm ideological consciences but do not produce concrete results for the people and create a bellicose and confrontational impression that alienates us from a large portion of the population."⁵⁵⁶

Whether this split between the "pragmatists" and the rest of the FMLN reflected past rivalry for FMLN hegemony or authentic political differences, it cost the FMLN seven legislative seats after the 1994 elections. The split also forced the FMLN to dissolve its previous federated arrangement (where each of the five parties had one vote), legalizing a single party where former organizational attributions were formally ended and the political commission was expanded to 15 allegedly non-partisan representatives as the highest decision making authority.⁵⁵⁷

As they did many times in war, the FMLN rebounded in the 1997 elections, winning in 54 municipalities, including the capital, 7 of the 11 municipalities of San Salvador Metropolitan Area (AMSS) and 6 of 14 departmental capitals.⁵⁵⁸ After 1997 elections, the FMLN now governed a majority of the national population at the local level. In the national assembly, the FMLN won a total of 27 legislative seats – one less than ARENA. The significance of this gain is underscored given the FMLN total had been reduced to 14 seats. Five smaller parties, including the PD, divided up 11 uncommitted seats. At both the municipal and legislative levels, the correlation of political power had fundamentally changed.

⁵⁵⁵ The San Andrés Pact was signed on May 31, 1995, brokered by ex-ERP commander, Joaquin Villalobos. Legislative opposition by the PCN initially prevented the bill's approval ARENA negotiated the PD votes allegedly after winning several modest concessions (reducing the VAT rate increase from 14 to 13% and earmarking the revenue for fulfilling the expenditure targets of the Peace Accords). A USAID official argued that municipal transfers were to be funded in part by this VAT increase despite the delay by over two years, which is plausible since this transfer was eventually funded from the national budget although without earmarks.

⁵⁵⁶ NotiSur, May 20, 1994 <http://ssdc.ucsd.edu/news/notisur/h94/notisur.19940520.html>, accessed November 2005.

⁵⁵⁷ Representatives of all five FMLN parties remained, although the FPL retained a de facto majority. Spence, Vickers and Dye (1994a: 26-27).

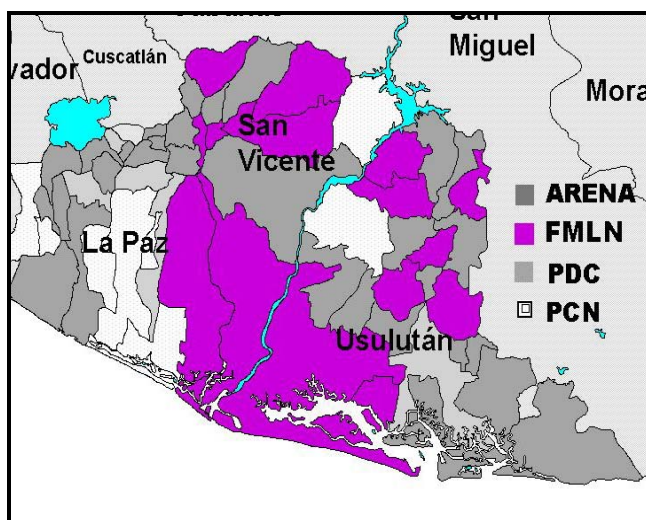
⁵⁵⁸ Of the 54 municipalities won by the FMLN, 6 were in coalition with smaller parties. The AMSS is the most densely populated region of the country, accounting for nearly a third of the national population.

Electoral gains after 2000 established the FMLN as the second political force in the country, governing in 79 municipalities, including the capital city of San Salvador.⁵⁵⁹ More importantly, the FMLN increased their seats in the National Assembly to 31 in 2000, eliminating ARENA's legislative working majority. The 1997 elections were the tipping point that greatly enhanced the FMLN's legislative bargaining capacity and dramatically raised their visibility as mayors and councils in some of the largest municipalities.

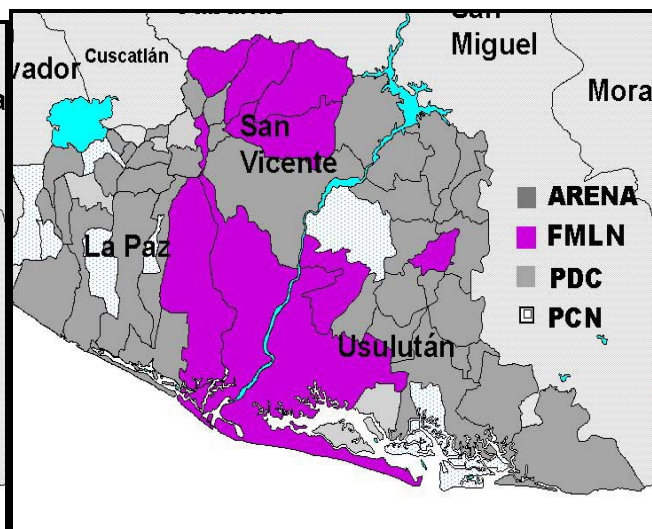
In the paracentral region, towns governed by FMLN mayors and councils increased from just two in 1994, the first elections in which the FMLN competed officially as a legal party, to 15 in 2000, including the departmental capital of La Paz, Zacatecoluca.⁵⁶⁰ FMLN post-war governance at the municipal level has grown steadily in the region, as fears instilled by ARENA propaganda diminished and responsive local rule reflected the deeply rooted support among the local peasant population. As shown in Figure 6.1, political competition in the paracentral region has featured the decline of the PDC and ARENA offset by the advance of the FMLN and the PCN. FMLN electoral support is based in ex-conflictive zones in northern and southern San Vicente, with moderate but growing support in Usulután and persistently low support in La Paz (the latter in spite of winning the densely populated departmental capital since 1997).

⁵⁵⁹ El Salvador has a unicameral legislature with 7 parties competing for 84 seats. 20 deputies have until recently been elected by proportional representation in a national vote, and 64 deputies were elected by multiseat departmental districts. In the 2006 elections all 84 seats will for the first time be distributed in multiseat departmental districts. Since 2003, an additional seven elected deputies and five mayors, including the mayor of San Salvador, have split from the FMLN to form a competing left party.

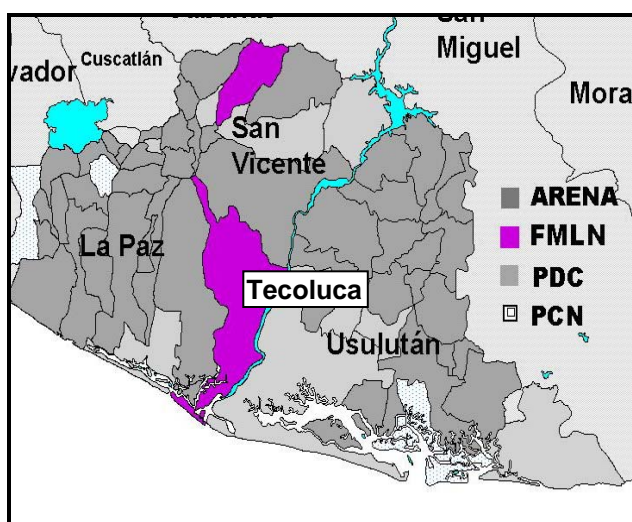
⁵⁶⁰ The FMLN have governed 6 of 13 municipalities in San Vicente since 1997, and 8 of 23 municipalities in Usulután since 2000. Yet, the FMLN has only won in 1 of 23 towns in La Paz, the largest municipality of Zacatecoluca. The March 2000 municipal and deputy election results stand in stark contrast to presidential elections the year before, in which FMLN won less than 30% of the vote to ARENA's 54% precluding even a second round. Rather than a turnaround for the FMLN, it was the type of election that mattered. The FMLN has more credibility in local rule than at the national level.



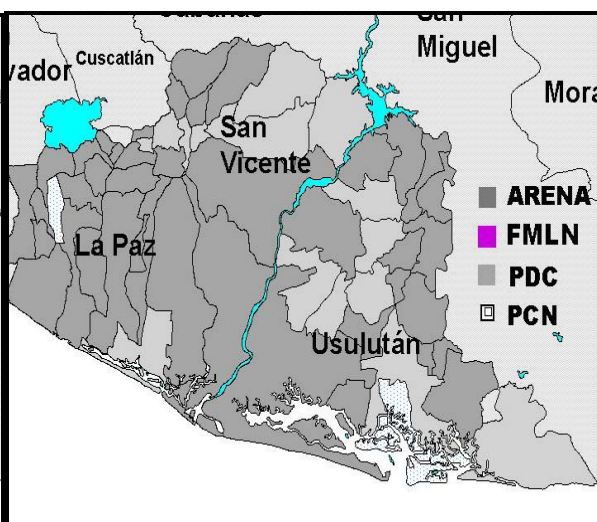
1997 Municipal & Legislative Elections



2000 Municipal & Legislative Elections



1994 Muni, Pres. & Leg. Elections



1991 Municipal Elections

Figure 6.1 Paracentral Region Municipal Voting Results (1991 - 2000)

Opposition mobilization networks could now consider legislative strategies that had to transcend obstructionist tactics and contend with the challenges of advancing alternative policy proposals. The capacity to propose development alternatives to the dominant neoliberal reform agenda has proven a much more difficult task for opposition deputies, mayors and NGO leaders. In part due to the inexperience in proposing viable economic alternatives, despite this impressive advance, the FMLN has failed to even force a second round runoff in Presidential races since 1994.

Lacking a simple majority in the legislature, the FMLN has rarely been able to form stable majority coalitions necessary to advance its own post-war economic agenda in the national assembly.⁵⁶¹ Instead, the opposition has settled for attempting to slow ARENA's reform agenda by blocking legislative votes that require a two-thirds majority. Legislative approval of new public debt and international treaties (including the ratification or amendment of international loans) requires a two thirds majority (56 of 84 votes), constitutional reforms require a three-fourths majority – votes that the FMLN could and did block in coalition with smaller parties and after 2000, independently. By 2000, 50% of the IDB approved loans were delayed by failure to win ratification in the Assembly.⁵⁶² This change in the correlation of political force opened new space for advancing an alternative agenda. Of the most significant victories was an increase in the municipal share of the national budget from 1% to 6% in late 1997.

Where legislative tactics have failed, organizations associated with the FMLN have resorted to challenging the policies of ARENA (and defending perceived social, economic and cultural rights) through social mobilization. Although used sparingly in the early years of the peace process, FMLN groups increasingly resorted to property occupations, marches, strikes, and

⁵⁶¹ One indicator of both the FMLN legislative power after 1997 and the ARENA capacity to block opposition initiatives was the record number of Presidential vetoes (41) exercised by President Francisco Flores (1999-2004), compared to just 4 by Calderon Sól, 1 by President Cristiani, and 20 by President Duarte. Of the PDC vetoes, 18 came in the 1989, when the PDC lost control of the Congress to ARENA.

⁵⁶² Following the 2001 earthquakes, agreement between ARENA and FMLN to redirect some lending to the most damaged areas allowed the ratification of four of these loans, leaving five operations totaling \$190 million awaiting ratification.

public demonstrations to advocate various reforms or shift the balance in local disputes.⁵⁶³ These contentious methods honed during decades of popular protest have been employed with limited success during the negotiation of peace and then in the post-war implementation of the Peace Accords.⁵⁶⁴ During the implementation of the PRN, the FMLN combatants and allied organizations used pressure to expand the scope, democratize the decision making process and increase funding commitments. However, considerable concessions were made in the areas of land and reintegration benefits.

In effect, the social forces associated with the FMLN have pursued an **empowerment though conflict** strategy to consolidate and build upon the political gains achieved through the Peace Accords.

The mixed electoral performance of the FMLN (rapid gains at the local and legislative levels but ever more resounding defeats in Presidential races) has been one factor contributing to deeper polarization within the party. The relative success at the municipal level reinforced the party's prioritization of decentralization to shift greater economic and political resources to this new and growing segment of the party leadership. The FMLN also encouraged considerable autonomy at the local levels in the pursuit of locally defined goals and to negotiate with a wider cross-section of interests.⁵⁶⁵ As such, the means of ascent within the party and points of access for the base multiplied rapidly as the FMLN governance expanded at the local and legislative level. Municipal conventions and primaries assumed increasing importance in selecting candidates and deliberating on party statute reform proposals. Leaders rising from the local governance tiers of the FMLN or social movement organizations associated with the left brought direct governance experience or project execution experience in the NGO sector and have tended to appreciate the costs and benefits of building consensus among a diverse set of interests. Local leaders also are more in touch with the unmet economic needs of the party's base, despite the

⁵⁶³ Disruptive tactics were used somewhat less by the FMLN leading up to the 1994 election, due to at least three factors. Divisions between the ERP and other FMLN parties prevented unity on political strategy. FMLN NGOs were much better prepared to advocate and channel services to FMLN demobilized combatants compared to the Armed Forces. Finally, some FMLN leaders were wary that mass mobilization would be perceived as a threat to the peace process and hurt the party's electoral chances.

⁵⁶⁴ See Wood (2000), chapter 4 and (2003) for an analysis of actions taken by FMLN groups in Usulután.

⁵⁶⁵ One indicator of this is the variation in party alliances for municipal elections. In the 2000 municipal elections, 85,000 votes (25% more than single party FMLN candidates) were gained through various coalitions.

transfer of land. Some of these same FMLN leaders that have ascended through the ranks to Congressional deputy or the party's political commission, have been the ones calling for greater compromise in the party's political strategy and more flexible criteria in the choice of alliances and Presidential candidates.

Leaders associated with a self-described "revolutionary socialist" tendency within the national party decision making structure have hardened their non-negotiable positions and tended to operate on the basis of what one analyst has characterized as "a messianic belief in its electoral invincibility, convinced ARENA could win only if the election were stolen" (David Holiday (2004: 5). Political strategy has increasingly focused on elections and the geographical target area has narrowed around the metropolitan San Salvador area, where over 50% of FMLN votes come from the 10 largest municipalities. Running the late former Communist party chief Shafick Handal as a Presidential candidate in 2004 reflected the revolutionary socialist faction control within the party. Although the FMLN raised their vote total to over 900,000 (an impressive 50% increase), Handal lost in the first round by 22 percentage points.

Persistent divisions between competing factions of the party have fractured the internal party cohesion. The moderate faction gained control of the party temporarily in 1997, which quickly reverted back to the "revolutionary socialist" leadership after the 1999 Presidential election loss.⁵⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the struggle within the FMLN is to a great degree a vertical transition between ascending local political elites and many among the historical vanguard of the FMLN during the war and is striking in its contrast with the political competition within the ruling coalition.

By the end of the current term (2009), ARENA will have controlled the executive branch of government for two decades, an unmatched record among Latin America's modern rightwing parties. Since the 2003 election, seven FMLN Congressional deputies, including the former Tecoluca mayor and recently elected Congressional deputy, Nicolás García and two popular sitting mayors of San Salvador elected behind an FMLN coalition, have broken with the party and formed the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), yet another opposition splinter party.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶ The moderates are also referred to as "reformadores," revisionists, or social democrats.

⁵⁶⁷ Estimates of factional affiliation vary, but the moderate faction within the FMLN claims up to 40% support within the party. Since 1994, 20 active Congressional deputies have broken with the FMLN. Despite this apparent level of dissent within the FMLN, 50 representatives of the orthodox wing of the party were elected to the 55 member national council in a questionable vote at the November 2004 General Assembly. Similar doubts have also

An FMLN plurality in the National Assembly has contributed to a qualitative improvement in the oversight and deliberative function of the Assembly, and by most accounts, FMLN municipal councils have set new standards for transparent local governance. Yet, electoral advances by the FMLN have come at the expense of lower voter turnout.⁵⁶⁸ The intractable political stalemate with ARENA has taken its toll on overall support for these political institutions and democracy in general.⁵⁶⁹

Although ARENA defeated the Christian Democrats in the 1989 with only 16.1% of the eligible electorate (23% of the registered electorate), it had become the leading political force in the country, accelerating PDC's downward trajectory to a minor party status by 1999.⁵⁷⁰ By the late 1980s, the PDC was weakened by infighting and widely discredited for its corruption and inability to halt either the war or the economic decline. For its hesitation to impose painful adjustment policies, the PDC increasingly lost U.S. support. The collapse of the PDC after Duarte's death in February, 1990 revealed the party's dependence on its principal leader and to the extent that the Christian Democrats ever represented a political center, the polarization of Salvadoran politics. Since 1985, no political movement has come close to representing a centrist alternative.⁵⁷¹ The 1991 Parliamentary and local elections, although replete with fraud, preserved ARENA's control over the Assembly and over 200 town halls.⁵⁷²

been raised about the veracity of the July 2003 primary election that nominated Handal as Presidential candidate by a small margin in a vote with less than 40% of the FMLN delegates participating.

⁵⁶⁸ Turnout in municipal and congressional elections dropped from 53.4% in 1994, to 39.1% in 1997, 38.7% in 2000, and 40.5% in 2003, before jumping to a record 70% in 2004. *Estudios Centroamericanos* (2003) Vol. 653-654, pg. 187.

⁵⁶⁹ Surveyed Latin American attitudes toward democracy and legislative institutions have plummeted in recent years, but El Salvador ranks close to the bottom (Cruz, 2001).

⁵⁷⁰ The PDC won 16% of the vote in 1994, 9% in 1997, and barely avoided extinction in 1999 with 4%.

⁵⁷¹ According to Latinobarometer (2001) and Lagos (2001), El Salvador ranks third from last in terms of the surveyed population identifying with the center range on an ideological scale, just above Honduras and Costa Rica. A 2003 UCA IUDOP survey on reported ideology presents a somewhat less polarized, center-right estimate of a 6.4 population average on a 1-10 scale with 10 representing the right. See Carey (2003: 2) for noted biases in the survey methodology.

⁵⁷² ARENA won 30 of the 60 Assembly seats in 1988, compared to the PDC's 22 and PCN's 7. In 1991, ARENA won 39 of 84, but preserved a working majority in alliance with the PCN's control of 9 seats. The PDC maintained 26 seats, and the newly formed center-left Democratic Convergence won a surprising 8 seats. Eguizábal (1992)

A possible coalition between the pragmatic tendency of the FMLN and the PDC in 1994 never congealed and the Christian Democrats finished a distant third. A party that won almost 600,000 votes in 1982 saw its total drop below 100,000 by the late 1990s. After the 1994 elections, the Christian Democrats split, losing ten seats from their original 18. The descent of the PDC eliminated its mobilization capacity and reduced its leverage to coalition votes in the Assembly and a few large municipal governments. Some of the labor and peasant gremios historically loyal to Duarte looked to the FMLN. Other PDC gremios, such as the *Confederación Nacional Campesino* led by Orlando Arevalo, jumped to ARENA.

The Cristiani administration surprised many by weathering the 1989 FMLN offensive, stiff opposition to peace concessions by hardliners on the right, and the trigger to internal divisions caused by the death of ARENA's founder, Roberto D'Aubuisson, in 1992 to cancer. ARENA has continued to mobilize the resources of the country's wealthiest citizens, but has also found a deep loyalty among a wide cross-section of the urban business sector and a conservative segment of the poor and rural population. Like the FMLN, the mobilization network of ARENA extends from rural hamlets in the periphery to most urban centers.

Since ARENA decided to broaden the party base after losing the 1984 election, two factions have contested for party dominance – the agrarian export elite with ties to the most conservative tendency of the military and the politically moderate financial and industrial elite, more concerned with economic and political modernization. Wood (2000) shows how the eventual willingness of ARENA to compromise in signing the peace accords with the FMLN was the product of an insurgency induced restructuring of elite economic, and in turn, political interests within the party.⁵⁷³ According to Wood and others, the civil war transformed the economy from one that had previously depended almost exclusively on export agriculture that rested on economic and political coercion to one increasingly dominated by an urban commercial sector fueled by remittances and the hidden hand of market forces rather than military repression to extract rents. The result was a shift in elite power within the Salvadoran oligarchy toward those groups capable of diversifying away from export agriculture. Cristiani's Presidency and the post 1994 composition of the party's executive council (COENA) represented the ascent of

⁵⁷³ Wood points to the decline in agricultural investment, particularly in coffee, compared to the surge in the commercial sector. She attributes these shifts to the combined destruction and restructuring of rural property rights caused by the FMLN, the effect of international migration, as well as the anti-agrarian macroeconomic policies by the PDC government. See also Johnson (1993), Paige (1993 and 1997), and Stanley (1996).

the modernizing elite faction within ARENA, although political concessions to the agrarian conservatives were needed maintain party unity.⁵⁷⁴

Wood provides a compelling explanation of how this insurgency induced a political shift within the Salvadoran oligarchy, which mirrored the economic transformation of the economy, made compromise possible. “With the eclipse of labor-repressive agriculture as the core interest of economic elites, neither the political nor the economic compromises made in the peace agreement – the FMLN’s participation in elections, the disbanding of the army, or the transfer of land to former combatants and FMLN civilian supporters – would pose a significant threat to postwar elite interests” Wood 2000: 76).

The competition within ARENA between elite factions became more acute with each Presidential succession, when in April and May following an election when the spoils of the state are redistributed. While modernizing elites were appointed to head the key finance, economy and planning Ministries in the government of Cristiani’s successor, Armando Calderon Sol, several ARENA hardliners gained important positions. Despite winning the 1994 elections by a wide margin, Calderon Sol faced a tremendous criticism from the extreme right – in part a backlash against political moderation and the perceived interference by the U.N. and other outsiders.⁵⁷⁵ An indication that Calderón Sol was less apt at holding party factions together was the “catastrophic” 1997 elections. Delinked from a Presidential election, a lower turnout favored the FMLN, which increased its share of the vote to 33% (the total number of votes increased by 90,000). ARENA lost over 200,000 votes and its vote share dropped to 37%.

In part fueled by resentment with the economic downturn in 1996, ARENA’s base failed to turn out in the San Salvador and secondary cities, allowing the FMLN to win the capital and eight other medium sized metropolitan municipalities. However, the government’s inability to assuage unsatisfied agrarian elites cost the party lost as many as 10 legislative seats where

⁵⁷⁴ Paige (1997), Murray (1995:9-15). The 1991 bank privatization, in which Cristiani himself is widely considered to have profited personally, was rigged to benefit ARENA loyalists in both factions. Roberto Angulo, for example, patron of the landowning family that dominated San Vicente, was handed the leadership of the National Assembly.

⁵⁷⁵ Four modernizing faction Ministers were forced to resign in the first months of the Calderon Sol Presidency. Representatives of the agrarian elite within ARENA included Roberto Angulo (Minister of Interior), Alvarez, Minister of Agriculture, and Juan Domenech (ANTEL, then President of the National Assembly), Raúl García Prieto (BFA). Perhaps most visible during 1995 was the campaign by Kirio Waldo Salgado, *Diario de Hoy* columnist representing the extreme right, in a campaign of attacks against the corruption associated with Calderon Sol that resulted in the resignation of several cabinet ministers and a general sense of paralysis in the government’s policy agenda. See Spence, Vickers & Dye (1995: 23-25).

ARENA representatives, including Francisco Merino – the ARENA vice-president under Cristiani, switched to the PCN. The PCN, which has historically represented the interests of the military has clearly been the second principal beneficiary of voter discontent with ARENA, doubling its vote share between 1994 and 2003. More importantly, the PCN increased its number of deputies from 4 to 16 in 2003. At the local level, ARENA has seen its influence wane from 206 municipalities in 1994 to only 111 in 2003. Again, the PCN has been the primary beneficiary as many local ARENERO candidates have defected to the PCN and boosted its number of mayors from 9 in 1994 to 53 in 2003.⁵⁷⁶ Of the 245 PCN candidates for mayor in 2003, 44 were ex-ARENEROs, or 18%, and 19 were mayors for the ruling party during the 1997-2000 period. Ten had leadership responsibilities within the party and another 15 were councilpersons in ARENA municipalities or prior ARENA candidates.⁵⁷⁷

This instability within the ruling party suggests that ARENA has struggled to manage its own modernizing transition.⁵⁷⁸ Cristiani was appointed to head COENA in 1997 and tilted the committees balance heavily in favor of party's modernizing elite.⁵⁷⁹ Although the PCN may increasingly be harvesting the discontent within ARENA and toward the ruling party among the electorate, on most substantive policy issues there is little difference between the two parties. A recent UCA-IUDOP survey asked voters to locate their preferred party on an ideological scale. Supporters ranked the PCN and ARENA at 7.7 and 8.7, respectively, on a 1-10 scale.⁵⁸⁰ Elected mayors and deputies that have switched to the PCN have often done so to protest the distribution

⁵⁷⁶ The PCN, like the PDC before it, benefits from political system that rewards the top three parties in the distribution of Congressional seats. In 2000, the PCN won 19% of the Congressional seats (16) despite only winning 13% of the vote. With the elimination of 20 national proportional representation slate in 2006, the PCN vote and share of legislative seats fell to 10 seats while ARENA's share rose.

⁵⁷⁷ *La Prensa Gráfica*, Jan 18, 2003.

⁵⁷⁸ A similar shakeup occurred between 1999 and 2000, when Francisco Flores won the Presidency, but lost his working majority in the Assembly to the FMLN the following year after high profile elites within the party jumped to the PCN. Although Cristiani was forced to resign as head of the party, his successor, Walter Araujo, maintained close ties with the ex-President and the balance within COENA has continued to favor the industrial-financial elite.

⁵⁷⁹ Artiga-González (2003: 189-191). Since 1997, the business technocrats identified with the Flores administration have been the majority within COENA, despite constant finger pointing and apparent reshuffling between agrarian hardliners that line up behind ex-President Calderon Sol and modernizers that line up behind Cristiani. Both groups blamed Flores for the 2003 elections.

⁵⁸⁰ IUDOP (2003) San Salvador. FMLN supporters gave their party a 2.6, CDU – 4.9, and PDC – 6.4.

of patronage in ARENA controlled governments or exclusion from COENA managed decision making processes. Artiga-Gonzalez points out that in contrast to steady FMLN gains and ARENA losses in each department since 1994, the PCN voter base is “volatile, unstable and subject to conjunctural swings.”⁵⁸¹ In the three legislative elections between 1994 and 2000, PCN support rose then fell or vice versa in 9 of 14 Salvadoran departments, and in only 5 were steady increases observed.⁵⁸² The ARENA-PCN bargaining is another aspect of the horizontal shift within the counter-insurgent mobilization network.

Despite these mounting political divisions and the erosion of support at the local and legislative levels, ARENA has managed to consolidate its control over the executive. In turn, ARENA Presidents have enjoyed solid support from the national business elite and the IFIs, permitting relative freedom to accelerate the implementation of economic stabilization reforms.⁵⁸³ Consistent with the stabilizing counter-insurgency framework adopted during war, the Cristiani government brokered a conception of post-war reconstruction as primarily a technical problem rather than a political one.⁵⁸⁴ This conception of reconstruction insulated the core structural adjustment reforms (privatization and decentralization of the state, trade and exchange rate liberalization, tax reform) from other central issues of the Peace Accords: (titling of land, infrastructure reconstruction, re-integration assistance for of ex-combatants).⁵⁸⁵ The roles assigned to local actors reflected the ARENA government view that the reconstruction plan was a project to be designed by hand picked professionals and executed by beneficiaries.

⁵⁸¹ *Estudios Centroamericanos* (March 2000) Vol. 617, pg. 279. Factors that determine PCN support can include confidence among right wing pressure groups, such as the ex-civil patrollers or transport business owners, that ARENA will best represent their demands, as well as personal disputes that lead to both defections and reintegration of mayors and deputies.

⁵⁸² A similar pattern was observed in the municipal vote in department capital cities.

⁵⁸³ The World Bank resumed formal lending to El Salvador with the approval of the first structural adjustment loan to El Salvador in 1991. The IDB also stepped up adjustment lending in the early 1990s. Together, these multilateral banks gradually substituted for USAID in supervising the reform of the Salvadoran economy (Segovia, 1995, ch.4)

⁵⁸⁴ The technical approach, of course, omitted important domains of the Peace Accords, such as prosecuting human rights violators identified by the Truth Commission, negotiating the political economic model to be pursued, and reforms to the electoral system, among others.

⁵⁸⁵ Privatization included banks, telecommunications, energy distribution and production, as well as various state agricultural agencies IRA, pension funds. In 2000, El Salvador converted its currency to the U.S. dollar. The Heritage Foundation ranked El Salvador as one of the “freest” economies in the world and the top Latin American reformer.

Decentralization was part of the design of reconstruction, yet the top-down implementation belied any stated interest in this reform and funding flows to municipalities were only intended to meet emergency needs and mollify the discontent of local elites.

In effect, ARENA pursued an **empowerment by invitation** approach to post-war reconstruction, where participation was strictly limited to the execution of economic policies that were negotiated only with the IMF and multilateral lenders, and thus uncontestable by the public. Consent regarding the equity of these policies was presumptively based on the capacity to maintain political stability.

The performance of the post-war Salvadoran economy under ARENA rule is best viewed by comparing the first and second halves of the past decade. In the first half (1992-1996) \$3 billion in funding for the National Plan for Reconstruction flowed into El Salvador, jumpstarting the country's economic growth to an average rate of 6%.⁵⁸⁶ Trade liberalization helped diversify exports away from coffee, sugar and beef with an expansion of the *maquila* sector in peri-urban areas.⁵⁸⁷ Access to basic services improved, boosting education and health indicators, although social spending remains well below levels required to develop a competitive labor force.⁵⁸⁸

A decade into the post-war period, significant gains had been made in reducing income poverty. However, a slowdown in that rate of poverty reduction by the mid 1990s and the poorly understood impact of remittances in this reduction have fed the perception that the benefits of the economic reforms had been oversold and unevenly distributed.⁵⁸⁹ With a current growth rate of 2-3% growth, El Salvador is not likely to recover its 1978 per capita income level until 2015.

⁵⁸⁶ El Salvador also renegotiated \$136 million of its external debt with the Paris Club, and in 1992 the United States cancelled 75% of its concessional debt (\$436 million).

⁵⁸⁷ Coffee, sugar and fish products represented 44% of all Salvadoran exports between 1994-1999, but dropped to 24% between 2000-2004. The fall in the price of coffee was responsible for more than 50% of this shift, according to the SIECA Trade Database (2005), which adjusts total export value by including only the net value added of *maquila* exports.

⁵⁸⁸ UNDP (2003: ch.3) point to lower chronic malnutrition in children below five years of age (measured in terms of height and weight malnutrition with respect to weight declined from 31.7% to 18.9%, San Vicente 1998, estimate of 27.1% and with respect to height declined 16.1% to 10.3%. The San Vicente 1998 estimate is 15.6% During the same period, infant mortality (less than 5 years) also declined from 60 per 1000 to 39.

⁵⁸⁹ McKenzie and Mookherjee (2003) argue that there is a widespread perception, even among observers sympathetic to privatization, that privatization has had negative effects on wealth distribution. Birdsall and Nellis (2002) conclude that most privatization programs have, at least in the short run, worsened the distribution of assets and incomes.

The economy slowed due to a reduction in aid flows, the effects of the global financial crisis (1997) and several external shocks. Despite deep reforms, the Salvadoran economy has managed only 2.8% growth since 1997, and with the exception of the 1998 windfall of privatization driven foreign investment (6.8% of GDP in 1998 compared to 1-2% on average), has failed to attract the expected flows of external investment. Despite the huge peace dividend in the form of oligopolistic rents, high profitability in some sectors and massive external subsidies during the first half of the 1990s, domestic savings and investment levels remain low.⁵⁹⁰ Growth in total factor productivity, which reversed a thirty year decline briefly between 1990-1995, turned negative again in the second half of the decade, indicating that reforms had failed to sustain efficiency gains.⁵⁹¹ Trade diversified away from primary agricultural commodities and increased, however an overvalued exchange rate led to imports outpacing exports and a steadily increasing the trade deficit. The Salvadoran private sector has not moved beyond a maquila sector that is increasingly obsolete in the face of more competitive global production. The lack of sufficient competition and risk adversity among the Salvadoran private sector has received increasing attention as factors behind the weak dynamism to the Salvadoran economy (Segovia 1995, Chapter 4; Rodrik 2003).

In terms of social sector gains, despite El Salvador's much heralded education reform, the country still lags in most indicators.⁵⁹² Despite high profile investments in education decentralization, school achievements levels increased by only 1 year on average (from 4.4 years to 5.5 years) between 1992 and 2002, still almost two years behind East Asia. Over a third of the population lacks adequate housing.⁵⁹³ Another factor that has heavily influenced the post-war

⁵⁹⁰ Harberger (1993) reports that outside of agriculture, real annual profit rates were 20-30%. Gross domestic savings and gross national savings as a percent of GDP averaged about 3% and 16.1% from 1990-1995, respectively, compared to 37% and 36% in East Asia. Savings and investment have declined from their high points in 1995. World Bank (1995, 2004: 7)

⁵⁹¹ TFP estimates adjust productivity (growth divided by capital and labor costs) for changes in the quality of labor associated with increases in educational attainment. While El Salvador's TFP growth rate was negative between 1960-1990, then again (-0.7%) from 1996-2001, East Asia experienced a TFP growth rate of 2% on average during the same period (World Bank, 2003: 7).

⁵⁹² Net secondary enrollment is only about 30%. Illiteracy declined from 27% to 18.3%, although official figures vastly overestimate functional literacy gains.

⁵⁹³ UNDP (2003, chapters 3 and 9). About a quarter of the population still do not have access to piped water, half do not have garbage removal, a fifth do not have electricity and over half do not have fixed line telephone service.

investment climate is persistently high level of social and criminal violence.⁵⁹⁴ The post-war period has been characterized by greater insecurity that manifests in high rates of victimization, homicide, kidnapping and in turn lower levels of productive investment.

Table 6.1 compares estimates of the percentage of the Salvadoran population below the relative and extreme poverty lines. While there is disagreement in the magnitude (10-27 point decline), most estimates point to a considerable reduction in relative and extreme poverty, although mostly in urban areas. Rural poverty remains high at 50-60%, depending on the source. According to the UNDP data, relative poverty in the paracentral region in 2002 was 61.1% for San Vicente, and just above 50% for La Paz and Usulután. Rural poverty for the region was near 80%. Despite relatively wealthy endowments of natural resources, these data suggest very low levels of human development in all three paracentral departments.⁵⁹⁵

While the estimates of poverty in Table 6.1 all show that El Salvador has reduced poverty since 1990, they vary in terms of how much. At the extremes, the FMLN claims that 80% of the population should be considered poor, in contrast to the claim of 33% by the Salvadoran government. Why is there so much variance in the estimates of poverty? Part of the answer rests upon competing estimates of the poverty line, which in El Salvador based on the price of a “basket” (*canasta basica*) of essential goods that is considered the minimum caloric intake. Extreme poverty is defined by the government as an individual income below the value of one “*canasta basica*,” relative poverty is income below twice the value of the *canasta basica*, also referred to as the *canasta basica ampliada*.⁵⁹⁶ Both the prices and number of items that make up the *canasta basica* and the *canasta ampliada* are indexed to the rate of inflation.

⁵⁹⁴ Violent crime direct and indirect costs of violence are estimated at 13% of GDP (see IDB, 2000b). This estimate includes the perverse costs of violence, such as the dramatic increase in private security.

⁵⁹⁵ The UNDP measures human development as the composite of per capita income, educational achievement, and life expectancy. The department of La Paz was ranked at 0.559, Usulután at 0.547 and San Vicente at 0.525. The entire country was ranked at 0.609, reflecting an urban-rural disparity. Similar human development classifications for 1996 included Canada, ranked number 1 at 0.985, Costa Rica 0.916, Cuba 0.752, Guatemala 0.601, Honduras 0.597, Gabon 0.577, Ivory Coast 0.558, and Cameroon 0.498. (UNDP 1997: 46,66).

⁵⁹⁶ The urban and rural *canasta basica* (CBA) contains 986 and 671 grams, respectively of bread or tortillas, rice, meat, oils, eggs, milk, fruit, beans, vegetables, sugar, and cooking fuel. Both the urban and rural CBA contain the minimal caloric intake, although the quality of urban and rural composition of foods differs significantly. Other essential household expenses are included in the *canasta ampliada* (CA), although the value is typically estimated to be double the CB. The UNDP argues that prices and family size differ in urban and rural areas, thus requiring a correction factor to the official CBA and CA estimates. Annual and monthly pricing of the CB items can be found at El Salvador Ministerio de Economía, DIGESTYC, <http://www.digestyc.gob.sv/>, accessed November, 2005.

There are at least two reasons why the poverty line may be underestimated.⁵⁹⁷ First, there are competing estimates of price inflation for the goods that make up the food basket. The official value of the CB and CBA both decreased between 5-7% from 1996-1998 to 2003, due to deflation of some commodity prices (based on values derived from the survey itself). At the same time, the official consumer price index, another indicator of overall price inflation, has increased at almost double the rate of the CB/CBA. The difference between these two competing indicators of inflation raise questions about the most appropriate valuation of essential goods. Others point out that the *canasta ampliada* does not accurately reflect the price changes of electricity, fuel, housing and education, which have increased by as much as 400% between 1992-2002 – mostly in urban areas. Adjustments for these inaccuracies would likely diminish the magnitude of income poverty reduction.

Another factor may be changes in the methodology of the household survey itself. In 1991, the baseline year for the current trend line, the household survey was not representative of the rural sector and excludes several conflictive zones. Accounting for these exclusions would likely increase poverty during that year. The overall survey sample size has also fluctuated, from 20,000 households in 1994, to 10,000 in 1995-1997, back to 12,350 in 1998 and 16,000 in 1999. This variation in sample size influences poverty estimates in two ways. The smaller samples of 10,000 or less reduce the confidence interval (below +/- 1% of the true poverty level) and reduces the probability that the sample is representative of the Salvadoran population (from 99% to 95%).

⁵⁹⁷ The UCA Economy department has argued in *Proceso* that official figures underestimate the *canasta basica*, and therefore poverty as well (Editions No. 801 & 802, April 1 - 18, 1998, pp. 7-9, pp. 4-5; No. 840, Jan 27, 1999, pp. 10-11; See discussion in UNDP 2003, pgs 60-62. Székely uses \$2 PPP as the cutoff for relative poverty, which may explain the higher values he estimates.

Table 6.1 Comparison of Poverty Estimates for El Salvador, 1990-2003

Year	Government		World Bank		UNDP		CEPAL		Székely (IDB)
	Total	Rural	Total	Rural	Total	Rural	Total	Rural	Total
	Rel Ext	Rel Ext	Rel Ext	Rel Ext	Rel Ext	Rel Ext	Rel Ext	Rel Ext	Rel
1980							68.0 51.0		
1990							74.0 ⁵⁹⁸ 56.0		
1991	59.7 28.2	66.1 33.6	64.4 31.2	69.6 32.0	65.7 32.4	71.2 36.8			
1992	58.7 27.7	65.0 34.0			65.0 31.5	70.4 37.0			
1993	57.5 27.0	65.3 33.8			66.6 33.3	74.2 40.3			
1994	52.4 23.9	64.6 34.8	66.0 ⁵⁹⁹ 27.0	77.0 35.0	72.8 28.8	71.0 40.0			
1995	47.5 18.2	58.2 26.5	50.5 20.5	65.0 33.0	52.9 21.0	63.9 29.2	54.2 21.7	64.4 29.9	58.6
1996	51.7 21.9	64.8 32.3			58.1 26.3	70.7 37.0			
1997	48.1 18.5	61.6 27.9			55.4 23.2		55.5 23.3	69.2 33.7	61.3
1998	48.0 18.5				50.5 22.6	64.0 33.3			63.98
1999					47.5 20.1	61.5 31.3	49.8 21.9	65.1 34.3	63.98
2000			40.0 16.0	56.0 28.0	44.7 19.3		49.9 22.2		
2001			39.0 15.6	52.0 27.0	44.4 19.3		49.9 22.5	62.4 33.3	
2002	33.0		37.2 15.4	50.0 28.5	42.9 19.2				

The World Bank argues that there are also reasons why poverty rates might be overestimated. Consumption reported in household surveys tends to be more accurate than

⁵⁹⁸ The 1980 and 1990 estimates are from Wood (2000: 62), citing CEPAL (1993: 6).

⁵⁹⁹ World Bank estimates based on consumption data, reported in the 1997 El Salvador: Rural Development Study. Annex 4, although the methodology is admittedly questionable.

income reporting.⁶⁰⁰ However, comparable expenditure data is not available nor used to compute poverty estimates here (Londoño and Székely 2000).

My own analysis of the 1998 household survey using several aggregate family income indicators suggests that rural poverty is 65-68%, while urban poverty is between 41% and 46%. More than half of those that have moved out of poverty, hover within a narrow 20% margin above the defined limit, suggesting that they remain vulnerable to shocks that could easily push them down again. Clearly, post-war reconstruction and the economic policies of ARENA had done little to improve rural livelihoods.

What poverty reduction was achieved can be attributed to fast economic growth, social policy, cooperation flows, and a dramatic increase in remittances since the early 1990s. The evidence suggests that the steadily increasing remittance flows (with over 20% of households now receiving almost \$2.9 billion annually) had as much if not more to do with poverty reduction than economic growth or public policy.

However, migration has also contributed a variety of negative side-effects, including exchange rate appreciation, a “brain drain” of an estimated 50% of the country’s college graduates, and the fraying the country’s social fabric (World Bank 2005d; Adams 2003). External migration and remittances have also been consistent with high income inequality and may even influence inequality as the poorest households are less likely to be able to migrate or receive remittances.⁶⁰¹ Despite these enormous external transfers, the Salvadoran debt has increased dramatically to nearly 50% of GDP.

Within this inauspicious economic climate, many combatants and their families were demobilized in rural areas and encouraged to resume or begin agrarian or non-agricultural rural vocations. The National Reconstruction Plan (1992-1996) was designed largely as a rural reconstruction plan that would target 115 municipalities most affected by the war (40% of the country) and a population of 1.4 million beneficiaries (25% of El Salvador’s population) over a

⁶⁰⁰ Also, household surveys tend to undercount the wealthy and to under-report some income sources, such as production for consumption and remittances. Both make income a less reliable indicator for poverty estimates and tend to underestimate income. The methodology for calculating both income and expenses is sensitive to various assumptions that can significantly change poverty estimates.

⁶⁰¹ Recent World Bank estimates claim that remittances may reinforce inequality, see Wodon (2001); Cox Edwards and Ureta (2003); Mason and Arias (2004). Earlier studies point to the redistributive effect of remittances. Montes (1987) and CEPAL (1993). There is most likely a redistributive effect toward the second and middle quintiles.

five year period.⁶⁰² The cost of the overall PRN was estimated at \$1.8 billion.⁶⁰³ In response to FMLN pressure, two of the four principal responsibilities given to the cabinet level Secretariat for National Reconstruction, created in 1992, included stimulating citizen participation in the process of local decision-making and promoting the participation of NGOs, community associations and the private sector in the plan's implementation. Competing conceptions of decentralization would therefore figure prominently in how the reconstruction plan was carried out.

The PRN encompassed land transfer, credit (housing mortgage, land purchase and production), pensions for war-wounded, training programs, housing and basic services, as well as other compensatory measures related to structural adjustment. Some 25,000 former combatants received training that offered ex-combatants two or three different career tracks: agriculture, technical-vocational (microenterprise) or the officer option, which itself consisted of three tracks: vocational-technical (including agriculture), business management, and executive.⁶⁰⁴ For the FMLN, two thirds of all ex-combatants chose agricultural training. Depending on rank and location, demobilized FMLN and Armed Forces combatants were eligible for loans to finance economic activities, land purchase, and housing that could total over \$4,000 upon demobilization.⁶⁰⁵ Credit service payments quickly surpassed rural incomes, and when

⁶⁰² This population included 35,400 ex-soldiers, 11,000 ex-guerrillas, 60,000 displaced persons, and 26,000 repatriates.

⁶⁰³ The final amount for the PRN fluctuated in response to donor and FMLN pressure. See Rosa and Foley (2000) Total estimated funding needs for the PRN presented at the April 1993 Consultative Group meeting were \$1,828 million. MIPLAN (1993).

⁶⁰⁴ Wood (2000: 99) explains that the third track for some 600 mid-level FMLN commanders was controversial, resulting from a non-U.N. mediated negotiation between the FMLN and the government. In return for the "mandos medios" program, the FMLN conceded to the transfer of two units of the old Treasury Police into the PNC and to a delay in the resignations of the 103 military officers slated for removal by the Ad Hoc Commission.

⁶⁰⁵ Ex-combatants could borrow about \$3450 and \$4600 for land, repayable over thirty (twenty) years at 6% interest (a rate indexed to the 1980 agrarian reform and well below the 14-16% market rates). PTT beneficiaries ("tenedores") received credits of less than \$1,200. In addition, \$2874 housing credits were offered at 5% over 15 years, and basic production or business credits up to \$3448 on shorter terms were provided widely by NGOs. The Mid-Level Commanders Program offered higher credit ceilings, \$5747 maximum for small business credit, \$6897 for housing at 16%. Murray, Colletti and Spence (1994)

exacerbated by an environment prone to loan delinquency, repayment rates quickly plummeted.⁶⁰⁶

Proper sequencing of land transfer, training and credit was frustrated by bureaucratic delays and lack of funding in the overall reinsertion program.⁶⁰⁷ Confusion and discontent was also exacerbated by the exclusion from benefits of large groups, such as the ex-Armed Forces personnel that were not formally demobilized and thousands that served in the civil defense patrols. Demobilized and war wounded members of the FMLN and Government security forces clashed violently with the National Civilian Police between 1993 and 1996 in actions designed to pressure the government to provide the benefits promised in the Peace Accords.

The government and USAID (the PRN's largest overall donor) preferred an assistance strategy biased toward infrastructure, as well as austere short-term re-insertion programs that treated ex-combatants on an individual basis. Moreover, the government's economic reforms were financed on a separate track by World Bank and IDB structural adjustment loans, with little applicable "peace conditionality" to earmark reform generated benefits toward meeting the expectations associated with the PRN. The cost of reinsertion programs was initially estimated by the FMLN at \$258 million, compared to an initial government estimate of about half of that (Wood 2000: 97). In the end, the estimated cost had increased to \$342 million, although by 1996, only \$240 million had actually been funded. The \$102 million shortfall was picked up by the government, in part due to violent protests by veteran population on both sides (Rosa and Foley 2000: 131-132).

Overall evaluations of the PRN varied widely, largely due to differing expectations for the PRN.⁶⁰⁸ USAID and ARENA viewed the PRN as a stabilization measure, with no expectations for significant improvements in quality of life but at the same time exhorted local institutions to become self-sufficient. NGOs and many European donors criticized the top-down,

⁶⁰⁶ In addition to poor weather, an expectation that loans would not have to be repaid, disbursement sequencing problems, inadequate producer or microenterprise experience and misuse of funds, all contributing to a culture of non-payment during the PRN.

⁶⁰⁷ A 1996 survey of ex-combatants in 1996 revealed that only 25% of ex-combatants and 20% of *tenedores* had found work in the area for which they were trained. Another found that nearly 1 of every 2 land transfer beneficiaries were not present working on the transferred farms. Goodin (1996: 34, 49).

⁶⁰⁸ Two opposing perspectives are represented in Goodin (1996) and the Boyce et. al (1995)

exclusionary design of the reconstruction plan that privileged loyalty to the government over experience with the target population.

Either as an inevitable fact of political economic history or the deliberate result of intentional neglect by the modernizing faction of Salvadoran oligarchy, the PRN failed to augur long-term economic reactivation in ex-conflictive zones (Rosa and Foley 2000). The failure of the PRN to halt the decline of agriculture was only intensified when ARENA's neoliberal reforms gained traction. Land and agricultural livelihoods were the foundation of the grievances that sustained an insurgency for over a decade and had managed extract transformative political concessions from a recalcitrant Salvadoran elite. In winning the peace, the FMLN ceded control over the rural economy, expecting instead to make good on revolutionary promises through the ballot box. To complete this analysis of the post-war political opportunity structure for decentralized development, I turn now to a closer look at the impact of the post-war economic policies on agriculture and the agrarian inequality.

B. POST-WAR IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

The rural economy, and small producers in particular, have fared poorly in the post-war period. The costs associated with the structural adjustment reforms have more than offset the reconstruction assistance directed to rural conflictive communities, by dismantling state protections and subsidies, while increasing vulnerability to external shocks. Agriculture grew only a third as much as the rest of the economy (2.2%) between 1991-1997, and has declined steadily since 1992 as a share of the national GDP.⁶⁰⁹ Agrarian incomes have also declined. Two of every three rural households struggle to meet subsistence needs. While some diversification of household income away from agriculture has occurred, the predominant option of migration from the countryside to urban areas and abroad has been disorderly and further destabilizing for the rural economy.

⁶⁰⁹ Agriculture and agro-processing represented 35% of Salvadoran GDP in 1980, but had dropped below 20% by late 1990s.

As a result, rural producers have experienced a steady deterioration in economic security. Rural development options have been limited. In parallel, rural gremios have lost much of their original political clout and have demonstrated a low capacity to do much more than slow this decline. The political and economic shifts within the rural economy have significantly altered the landscape for local economic development in the paracentral region. In the section that follows, I lay out the most significant shifts in El Salvador's agrarian structure and discuss the implications for farm livelihoods.

1. Post-war structures of income inequality

Expectations for post-war reconstruction placed a tremendous premium on narrowing inequality, with little apparent success. As illustrated in Table 6.2, household income inequality in El Salvador as measured by the ratio of the top quintile/bottom quintile, has steadily deteriorated between 1960-1979, and recovered during the war. On the eve of civil war, the top-bottom quintile ratio of 33:1 underscores an astounding disparity between rich and poor. After an initial decline in the first years of the post-war period, income inequality is on the rise again.

Table 6.2 Income Inequality in El Salvador, 1961-2002

	UNDP RatioTop20% /Bottom 20%	UNDP Gini	CEPAL	Székely	World Bank
1961	10.2				
1969	17				.69
1979	33				
1991					.53
1992	17	.527			
1995	16	.508	.507	.505	.50
1997					.51
1998	17.6	.526	.518	.559	
1999	19.4	.524		.545	
2002	24		.525		
Source: UNDP 2003, CEPAL (2002), Székely (2001), World Bank (2005b) all based upon EHPM household surveys.					

The World Bank suggests that income inequality may have diminished since 1991, however various estimates of income inequality Gini coefficients indicates that any trend in this direction has almost certainly reversed after 1997. Between 1992 and 2002, the poorest 20% experienced a decline in their income share to 2.4%, while the wealthiest 20% increased their share to 58.3%. The ratio of the top to bottom quintile increased from 17% in 1992 to 24% in 2002.

In my own analysis of the 1998 household survey, the national Gini for individual income inequality was 0.52. The spatial distribution of income inequality is illustrated in Figure 6.2. The areas of highest income inequality are the northern departments of Cabañas, Morazán and Chalatenango, as well as western departments of Ahuachapán, La Libertad and Santa Ana. The relatively less unequal departments are clustered in the central region – Cuscatlán, San Salvador and La Paz.

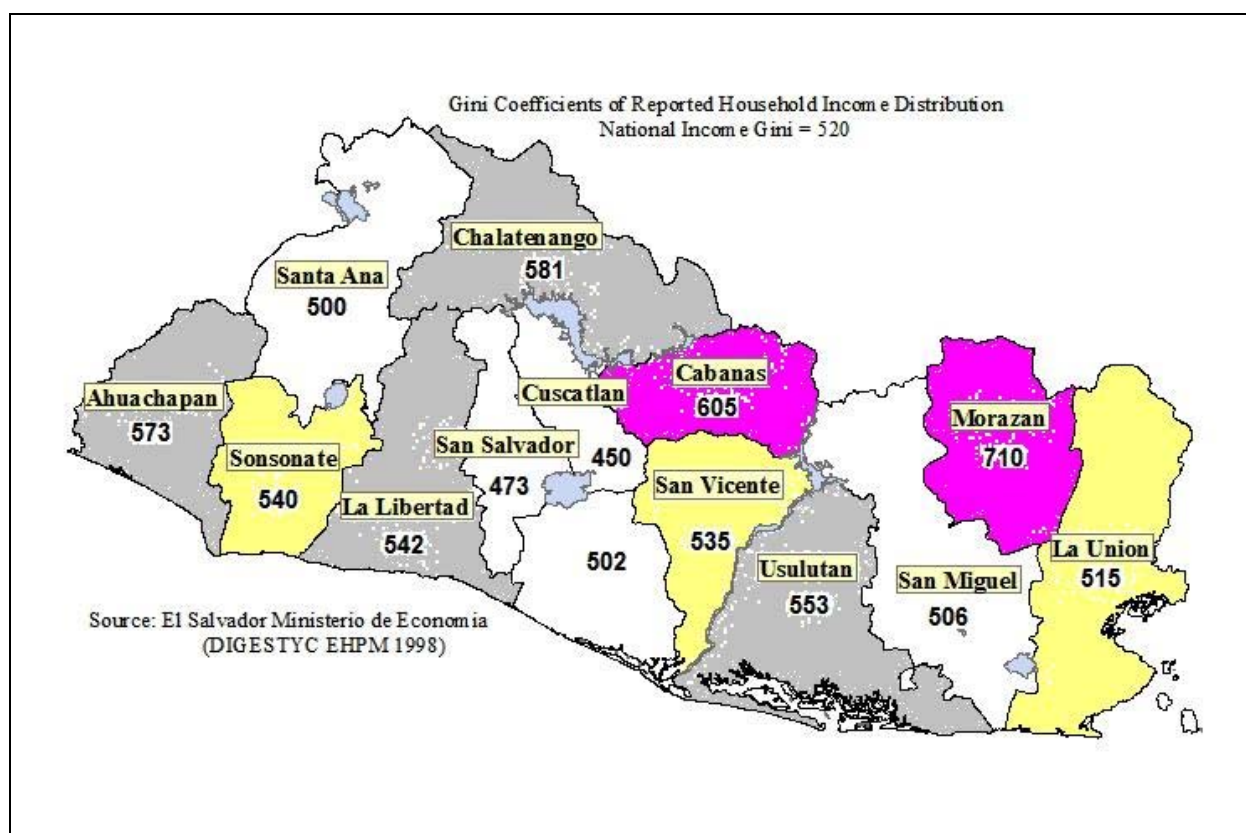


Figure 6.2 Household Income Inequality in El Salvador (1998)

As any survey researcher in Latin America can attest, household surveys tend to underestimate the actual level of income and asset inequality because the gated and guarded properties of the top 10-20% income strata can refuse to participate. For example, the highest reported monthly household income in the 1998 EHPM survey was \$57,201. Only 1,693 households in 1.34 million reported a monthly income greater than \$5,000, compared to over 300,000 households that report less than \$100 per month. When compared to 1998 reports of 166,000 annual value added tax filings that averaged \$350,000, the gap between surveyed and actual incomes of the wealthiest households suggests that the magnitude which the household survey understates income inequality maybe significant (Gallagher 2001). If we made a reasonable correction for missing income data for the richest households (by raising the incomes of the 5,000 households to \$50,000 per month), the national income Gini increases to 0.70. Has El Salvador really made any progress in reducing inequality since the 1960s?

To appreciate the true gap between rich and poor in El Salvador, as well the transition within the Salvadoran elite, consider the case of the Cristiani – Llach family. Before his designation as Presidential candidate, the family wealth of Alfredo Cristiani ranked in the bottom half of the top thirty coffee producers –with \$685,000 in assets and 8 businesses. This changed when as President, he authorized what is considered the most audacious political capture of the post-war period. In one week, the state bailed out nationalized banks at a cost of \$400 million and then privatized them.⁶¹⁰ By shielding the sale of bank stock from public scrutiny, the newly solvent banks were whisked up by old and new elites, including Cristiani himself, who purchased a significant share of the country's second largest bank, Cuscatlán. In turn, through Cuscatlan Bank, Cristiani-Llach family later acquired 28% of the Pension Fund Confía, when the state pensions system was privatized in 1998.

⁶¹⁰ Albiac (1999:851). *The Ley de Saneamiento* was approved on Dec. 6, 1990. One week later, the Bank Privatization Law was passed. In addition, the exchange rate was pegged to the dollar, mechanisms were established to capture remittances and the Monetary Board was dissolved, transferring authority to the Central Bank.

Paniagua Serrano (2000) builds on the economic ethnography by Colindres (1977) and Sevilla (1984) to update the interlocking recomposition of the Salvadoran business class through redistribution of state assets in the 1990s. Through carefully managed marriage alliances and overlapping corporate board memberships, diversifying coffee elites such as the Cristiani-Llach clan have leaped into the upper crust of the Salvadoran economic oligarchy, while preserving a boundary between themselves and the provincial tier below them.⁶¹¹

The pre-war Salvadoran social structure described by Adams, despite some turnover among the established elite families, persists in the post-war period. Moreover, the presence of cosmopolitan upper class elites, like Cristiani who commutes by helicopter to his family home perched above the Jiboa Valley, reinforces the likelihood that post-war inequality will remain a central obstacle. The presence of cosmopolitan elites, according to Adams, heighten attitudes of superiority and diminishes the “buen patrono” factor by weakening identification between the provincial elites and those below them. The provincial elite strives to become the cosmopolitan elite, and in so doing, weakens whatever reciprocal bonds he/she might have with the lower class. Locals tend to look to the large landowners, such as Cristiani, as the benefactor that solves local problems, rather than finding solutions themselves. Just as the elite realignment within ARENA has only reinforced income inequality at the national level, Cristiani’s strengthened presence in the Jiboa Valley suggests that the social structure there has changed little in 50 years.

2. Agrarian Structure: The long-term view, 1950-1998

Several important shifts have occurred in the Salvadoran agrarian structure since 1991. In the economically active population of 2.4 million in 1998, there has been overall shift toward non-agricultural jobs.⁶¹² The working-age population has nearly quadrupled in the past five decades, yet only about half a million people continue to work in agriculture in 1998, a number that has

⁶¹¹ The analysis by Paniagua is suggestive, relying on Board Membership lists rather than stock ownership values or net incomes. Nevertheless, the family names that continue to dominate the prize assets of Salvadoran economy offer a strong indication of continuity. The diagram of primary investors in the private pension fund AFP CONFIA identifies some 15 major families.

⁶¹² This section is based on a more detailed analysis by McElhinny and Seligson (2000).

varied only modestly in absolute terms over the last five decades.⁶¹³ Thus, in relative terms, the exodus from agriculture of young Salvadorans joining the ranks of the economically active population or displaced farmers and agricultural wage workers has accelerated in the past decade. As few as 1 in 5 of all eligible workers now hold jobs in agriculture, down from about one in three in 1991, and over one of every two in 1950.

Estimating the Landless and the Land-poor: Comparison of the change in occupational structure among the economically active population in agriculture between 1991 and 1998 in Table 6.3 reveals a considerable increase in the number of small farmers, but an equally sharp reduction in the number of farmers who employ laborers. The combined total of these two categories, considered non-impooverished farmers by Seligson's criteria (1995), now represent 27% of the agrarian labor force, up slightly from 23% in 1991. Temporary wage laborers have declined, while the unpaid family workers have increased and permanent wage workers have increased slightly. The land-poor population, those farmers with less than one manzana (0.7 ha.) to farm, has also increased slightly in relative terms since 1991. Surprisingly, the unemployed population has declined by 52%, but is still four times the national unemployment rate for all occupations of 7.9%.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹³ El Salvador lacks an agricultural frontier and invested in mechanization before the war. These factors combined with the lack of post-war investment in agricultural intensification, explain why agriculture has not generated new employment opportunities.

⁶¹⁴ The difference between 1991 and 1998 unemployment rates may reflect the more difficult employment conditions during the war or seasonal factors related to the timing of the survey.

Table 6.3 Occupations of the Economically Active Population in Agriculture in El Salvador

	1991		1998	
<i>Occupations</i>	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Land-poor	85,361	14%	76,006	15%
Temporary day-laborers	169,432	29%	116,401	23%
Unemployed	58,293	10%	30,314	6%
Small farmers and cooperative members	74,110	13%	115,070	23%
Farmers who employ laborers	56,808	10%	21,076	4%
Unpaid family laborers	62,008	11%	74,360	15%
Permanent day-laborers	75,649	13%	69,437	14%
Total	581,661	100%	502,646	100%

Source: Authors' calculations from raw, expanded data from DIGESTYC-EHPM, 1991-1992 and 1998

The increase in small farmers by 40,960 as shown in Table 6.3 no doubt reflects the most recent stage of the land redistribution that has been carried out by the land transfer program. However the decline in temporary wage laborers and unemployed may not represent the “flip side” of the land redistribution coin. The decrease may reflect the exodus from the agricultural sector.

Table 6.3 shows that landlessness and land poverty, defined as percentages of those actively engaged in agriculture, have diminished as a percentage of the Salvadoran agrarian labor force. **There are 222,700 landless and land-poor farmers, compared to 313,000 in 1991.** Yet, because the agrarian labor force has declined, many formerly landless peasants have most likely entered the urban informal sector. Landlessness and migration have a long-term association in El Salvador.⁶¹⁵ Net in-migration is measured as the difference between total department

⁶¹⁵ El Salvador has experienced several massive population shifts. Durham found that landlessness forced an estimated 300,000 Salvadorans to migrate to Honduras prior to the 1969 war, representing 1 of every 8 Salvadorans. One-in-three were displaced in some way during twelve years of civil war. Despite some repopulation of ex-conflictive zones, most migration has been toward the cities and toward the U.S. since 1992.

population in 1992 and 1998, then subtracting the national population growth for the six-year interim period of 12%. Landlessness and migration rates are shown in Figures 6.3 and 6.4.

The coastal region stretching from Sonsonate to Usulután has the highest landless population in relative terms. The eastern half of the country (with the exception of San Miguel) has experienced a net out-migration since 1992, (i.e. slower than normal population growth rate). However, the lower than normal population growth in the 1990s is likely related to the war.⁶¹⁶ The departments receiving the most immigrants are La Libertad and San Salvador, and the less politically conflictive zones to the west.⁶¹⁷ Migration has been from zones of high landlessness to zones of even higher landlessness.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁶ There is a significant and positive association between reported deaths during the war and out-migration (0.315).

⁶¹⁷ It is important to distinguish the violence of the 1970s and 1980s that was most clearly politically motivated and occurred largely to the north and east of San Salvador with the post-war social and criminal violence, the incidence of which is highest in the Pacific coastal departments to the west of, but including San Salvador.

⁶¹⁸ The association between net migration and landlessness of -0.31 is negative and significant. There is also a moderate positive correlation between net-migration and change in the economically active population in agriculture, 1992-1998 (+0.38).

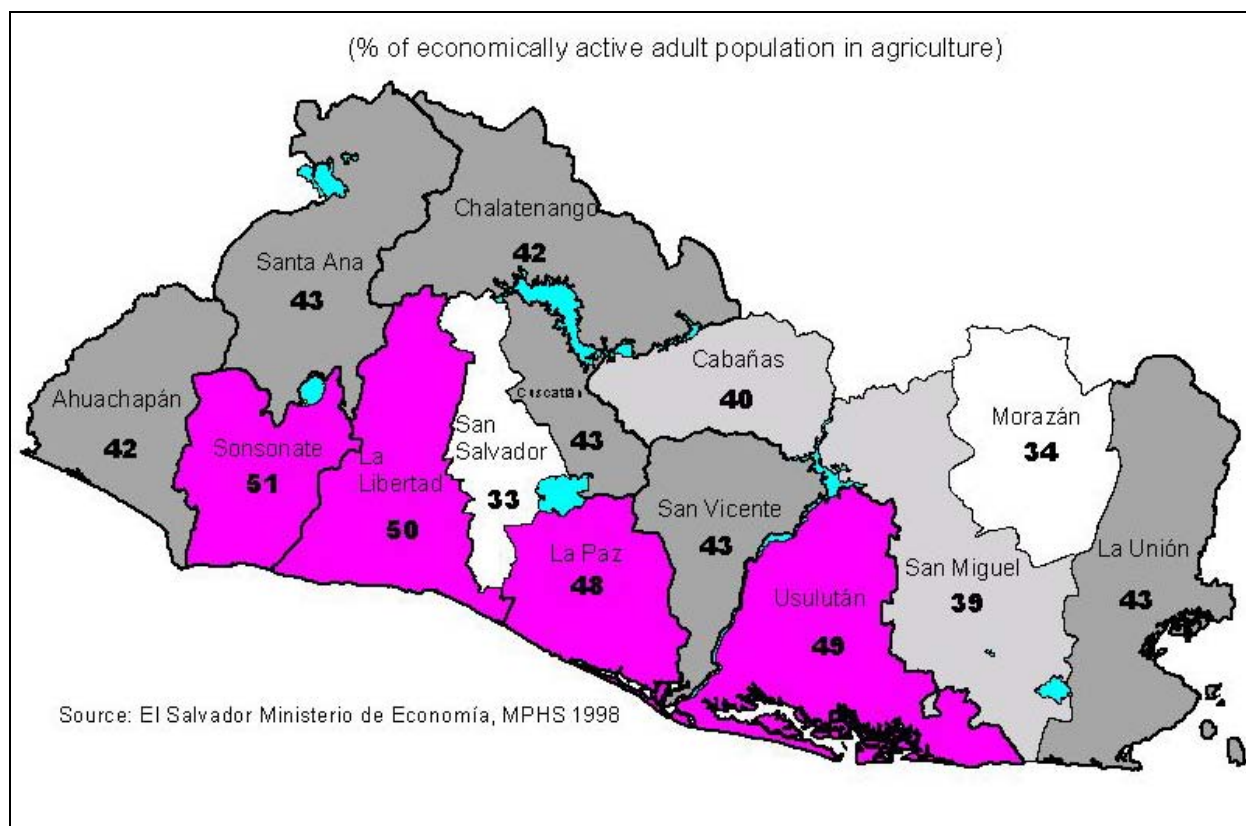


Figure 6.3 Landlessness in El Salvador, 1998

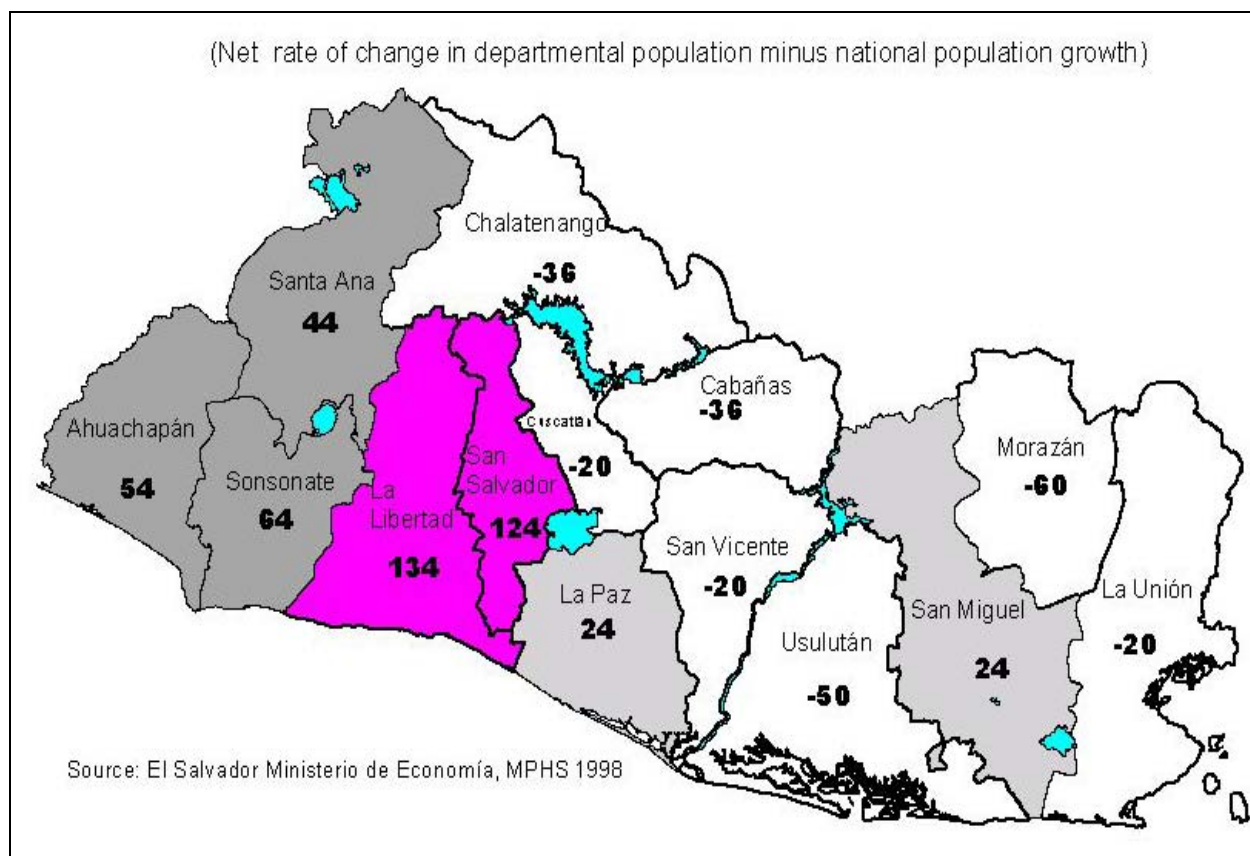


Figure 6.4 Net In-Migration Rate, 1992-98

This population shift suggests that many migrants remain involved in agriculture, but are settling in urban areas. Two types of occupations are likely candidates for this type of arrangement. Absentee landowners often relocate to urban areas, preferring to delegate the day-to-day property or crop management to employed help. Temporary day laborers may also relocate to semi-urban settings, but continue to work in agriculture as well as the commercial and light manufacturing economy circling San Salvador.⁶¹⁹ This migration suggests that post-war reconstruction has apparently not stabilized the livelihoods of re-integrated ex-combatants and ex-conflictive communities within the principal PRN departments, but rather encouraged migration to historically acquiescent zones in the west.

Table 6.4 compares the land tenure categories among farmers. Overall, Table 6.4 reveals that the absolute number of farmers (in terms of principal occupation) has increased by 2.5% since 1991 to 222,573.⁶²⁰ If the focus is only on the agrarian labor force whose primary vocation is farming, the number and percentage of fee-simple landowners has increased between 1991 and 1998, while the absolute and relative numbers of renters has declined. Sharecropping and cooperative tenure arrangements have not changed in the post-war period, the latter remaining well below the recognized level of agrarian cooperative membership in El Salvador. Of the 10,682 respondents who identified themselves as cooperative members in terms of land tenure in Table 6.4, only 14% also identified themselves as “*cooperativistas*” in terms of economic occupation (see Table 6.3).⁶²¹ Cooperative membership is highest in the coastal departments of

⁶¹⁹ Adams (1957: 466) notes this process occurring since 1930, thus blurring any sharp division between rural and urban.

⁶²⁰ The gross number of farms in 1998 was 296,728, when all persons having access to land are counted, compared to 251,943 calculated for 1991. The 1991 DIGESTYC-EHPM was a much smaller sample and was prevented from sampling the entire country due to the conflict. For these reasons, rural estimates are probably less reliable than later years of the survey.

⁶²¹ Over a third of the cooperative members (with respect to land tenure) identified their occupational status as “permanent salaried worker,” another 17% as “temporary day laborer, and a third as a farmer with access to some size parcel of land. The inconsistency may reflect the ongoing parcelization of cooperative land, the breakup of cooperatives, or the low identification with the cooperative as a form of labor organization, since 1989. By 1997, at least 12 cooperatives have been converted into individual tenancy, and 10 operate as mixed individual and cooperative tenancy (World Bank, 1998). This confusion between tenure and occupational status may partly explain a second problem - the DIGESTYC-EHPM underestimation of actual active cooperative membership. The true figure is itself the subject of debate. ISTA, the Salvadoran Agrarian Reform Agency, estimates approximately 30,000 cooperative workers, greatly exceeding the 13,000 total respondents who reported cooperative land tenure status for first or second occupation. Montoya (1996: 222) has estimated at least 110,000 agricultural workers belong to cooperatives.

Sonsonate, La Libertad and La Paz. Sharecropping has declined from 55,769 in 1961 (25% of all farms) to 10,188 (less than 5%), although *colonato* surprisingly continues to represent a viable tenure option for 15-20% of farmers in the Central region of Cuscatlán, La Paz and Cabañas. In sum, the data in Table 6.4 also show that less than 50% of all farmers have secure access to the land they farm.⁶²²

Table 6.4 Land Tenure of the Landed Population of El Salvador

Tenure categories	1991		1998	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fee simple landowners	68,569	31.6%	87,009	39.1%
Farmers having free use of land	23,477	10.8%	30,972	13.9%
Cooperative members	10,040	4.6%	10,682	4.8%
Renters	95,517	44.2%	80,953	36.4%
Sharecroppers	10,564	4.9%	10,188	4.6%
Colonos	2,039	0.9%	1,131	0.5%
Land promised to tenant	6,555	3.0%	--	--
Other	--	--	1,638	0.8%
Total landed	217,161	100.0%	222,573	100.0%

Source: Author's calculations from DIGESTYC-EHPM, 1991-1992 and 1998.

⁶²² Land security remains one of the top three reported concerns of several producer organizations (interviews conducted with leaders of CONFRAS, COACES, ADC and CNC in April, 1999. See also CIDAR (2000). Strasma (1989, 1990), and the World Bank (1998) have emphasized the benefits of a rental market in land scarce countries, but the contract enforcement conditions are rarely present in El Salvador. Many small farmers fear a reconcentration of landholdings as cooperatives and PTT properties are parcelized and titled.

3. Agrarian Inequality (1950-1998)

The following Tables explore the changes in agrarian occupational structure in land distribution in the post-war period compared to the pre-war period. Table 6.5 summarizes the shifts in tenure between 1950 and 1998. The total agrarian labor force has leveled off at about 500,000 workers. The landless population, which stood at 47% of the agrarian labor force in 1991 had declined to 42% of the economically active population in agriculture by 1998.⁶²³ Table 6.5 also shows that in relative terms, landlessness has fallen to 1961 levels (higher if family labor is added), and represents a much smaller percentage of the total EAP (6.2% in 1998 vs. 15.7% in 1961).⁶²⁴

The long-term results also show negative trends for farmers. While on the one hand, the relative number of land-poor has declined (from 23.1% in 1991 to 16.2% in 1998), the relative population with access to land in general (landed plus land-poor) in 1998 (39.5%) has not recovered from its pre-war low point of 36% in 1971. **Remarkably, after 20 years of land reform, few additional farmers as a percent of all agricultural sector workers seem to have secured guaranteed access to land.**

Family laborers continue to increase in both relative and absolute terms, implying a limit to the continued subdivision of already small farms that is fostered by the relative absence of primogeniture among poor farm families. Smallholding is squeezed by the fall in agricultural wages and the increasing scarcity of land for future generations of peasant farmers caused by subdivision rather than expansion of holdings. Eventually, most sons and daughters awaiting land ownership through inheritance may be forced into landless categories of agricultural or non-farm work.⁶²⁵

Thus far, the analysis has focused on the distribution of workers in the agricultural sector. Turning to the change in distribution of farms, a much different picture emerges. Table 6.6

⁶²³ Defined as the sum of landless temporary wage laborers and family laborers.

⁶²⁴ The 30,314 unemployed respondents were assigned to previously reported tenure status.

⁶²⁵ A smaller 1992 survey by the World Bank found that 32% of rural labor force are farmers that live in rural areas, 43% are agricultural landless workers and 25% are landless workers in non-agricultural activities. This classification reflects the primary economic activity. Many people are classified as farmers also do off-farm work in agriculture or in other sectors and many landless farm workers also do non-agricultural activities and may have a small plot of land (World Bank 1998: 105).

Table 6.5 Agrarian Land Tenure in El Salvador, 1961-1998

	Agricultural Workers as a % of the Economically Active Agricultural Adult Population and the Economically Active Adult National Population											
Category of Agricultural Workers	1961 Census		1971 Census		1991 DIGESTYC-EHPM		1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM		1961	1971	1991	1998
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)				
Landed	118,687	28.5	78,167	14.4	136,171	23.4	116,948	23.3	16.3	6.7	8.3	5.2
Land-poor	96,465	23.1	119,350	22.0	96,821	16.6	81,338	16.2	13.4	10.2	5.9	3.6
Landless (temporary day workers)	115,161	27.6	207,116	38.1	198,309	34.1	137,626	27.4	15.7	17.8	12.1	6.2
Permanent wage workers	51,498	12.4	92,640	17.1	77,001	13.2	70,258	14.0	7.0	7.9	4.7	3.1
Family laborers	34,926	8.4	45,606	8.4	73,359	12.6	74,659	14.9	3.8	3.9	4.5	3.3
Total	416,728	100	542,879	100	581,661	100	502,646	100	----	----	----	----
Unemployed out of the above total	22,008	5.3	33,994	6.3	58,293	10.0	30,314	6.0	3.0	2.9	3.6	1.4

a. Percentages are yearly category sub-totals divided by the respective EAP above the age of 15 in Table 1.

assembles census and survey estimates of farm distribution over the past thirty years. Data for 1998 and 1998 (adjusted) are my calculations from the respective 1998 household survey, with the inclusion of all reported properties before and after corrections for under-reporting.⁶²⁶ Of principal interest is the extent to which land reforms have or have not improved the equality of landholding distribution between 1971 and 1998. Based on census and survey data, Table 6.6 shows that despite the decline in total farm area the gross number of farms in 1998 was 296,728, when all persons having access to land are counted, compared to 270,868 in 1971. The growth in farms coincides with a smaller average size, indicating the subdivision of large and small farms over the past three decades.

Gini coefficients are derived for each department using the adjusted distribution of farms and farm area summarized in Table 6.7.⁶²⁷ The Gini for land inequality has declined only slightly to 0.81 from 0.83 in 1961 (calculated using census data for both years).⁶²⁸ After land reforms transferred nearly 30% of all farm area, this might not seem logically possible. Yet, it is, for several reasons. First, we need to recall that as much as a third of this land was transferred from small farmers to other small farmers – having little effect on the distributional imbalance.

The Gini coefficient for land inequality for the entire country is 0.81 in 1998. The estimated 1998 value is virtually the same as the 1971. Land inequality changes most when there is change within the top and bottom shares. While the largest farms may have been eliminated, there was an equally significant shift toward greater *mini-fundismo* at the bottom. Much of the PTT redistribution was from the already middle-sized (25-50 ha) and small farm (5-25 ha) segments, to the micro-farm segment (0.33 – 5 ha). Micro-farms (less than 1 ha. in size) have increased as a proportion of total number of farms between 1950 (40%) and 1998 (66%). The average farm size of 4.4 ha. in 1998 is somewhat comparable to the industrialized country

⁶²⁶ See Appendix D for section that explains the methodology of corrections for under-reporting large and medium properties in the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM.

⁶²⁷ One additional adjustment eliminated reported farms less than one fourth of a hectare, which logically cannot be considered anything more than a backyard garden. This eliminated 37,290 farms, leaving a working total of 268,542 farms.

⁶²⁸ Montoya (1991:75) estimated a land inequality Gini of 0.75 for the late 1980s. The Gini values for 1988 relied on only four data points per department and required a correction for missing small farms and cooperative farms, which may account for the lower than average Gini values.

average of 8.8 ha in 1950. However, this indicator of progress toward a more rational use of available

Table 6.6 Estimating Change in Farm Distribution, 1971-1998

1971 Census	Total	0 - 20 ha.	20-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	270,868	259,703	9224	1941
% Total No. farms	100	95.9	3.4	0.8
Total Area (ha)	1,451,895	520,756	369,620	561,519
% of total area	100	35.9	25.5	38.7
Ave. farm area	5.4	2.0	40	289
1988 Survey	Total	0 - 25 ha.	25-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	269,832 ⁶²⁹	259,243	8390	2199
% Total No. farms	100	96.1	3.1	0.8
Total Area (ha)	1,542,343	510,239	390,100	642,004
% of total area	100	33.0	25.0	42.0
Ave. farm area	5.7	2.24	46.5	291.9
1998 Unadj. Survey	Total	0 - 25 ha.	25-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	296,728	294,865	1690	173
% Total No. farms	100	99.4	0.5	0.01
Total Area (ha)	561,393	442,230	94,883	24,280
% of total area	100	78.7	16.9	4.3
Ave. farm area	1.9	1.5	56.1	140.3
1998 Adj. Survey	Total	0 - 25 ha.	25-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	306,396	296,544	8347	1505
% Total No. farms	100	96.8	2.8	0.5
Total Area (ha) ^{b 630}	1,334,000	610,256	415,229	308,515
% of total area	100	45.7	31.1	23.1
Ave. farm area	4.4	2.1	49.7	205
Sources: DIGESTYC Censo Agropecuario 1954, 1967, 1974, 1991; McReynolds, Johnston, Gore, and Francis (1989); Ministerio de Economía, DIGESTYC-EHPM 1991 and 1998				

⁶²⁹ Includes 40,233 farms less than 2 mz. (1.41 ha.) that were excluded from the original study. An average farm size of 0.5 ha. is estimated to add 20,117 ha. total farm area. Estimates of small farms were adjusted to account for anomalies in departmental distribution in order to calculate department level Gini coefficients. See Appendix Table A5 in McElhinny and Seligson (2000).

⁶³⁰ Total farm area for medium and large farm strata is the sum of the reported farm area in the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM and the additional farm area derived in Appendix D, Tables D6 and D7, also reported in McElhinny and Seligson (2000). Subtracting the large and medium farm area from total area of 1,334,000 produces the total farm area for small farms.

Table 6.7 Rank Ordering of Salvadoran Departments by Land Inequality Gini

1961 Gini		1971 Gini		1988 Gini		1998 Gini		Rank Change Pct Chg 61-98	
LL	.885	SO	.878	SV	.715	SS	.851	CU	+8
SA	.859	LL	.867	US	.682	SO	.848	LU	+6
AH	.852	LP	.845	LU	.655	LL	.835	SS	+5
SO	.849	AH	.835	SM	.655	CU	.835	MO	+4
US	.832	SA	.832	CU	.649	LU	.831	LP	+3
SS	.809	US	.815	SO	.636	SV	.829	SO	+2
SV	.803	SS	.811	AH	.609	LP	.818	SV	+1
SM	.797	SV	.809	SA	.608	SM	.818	SM	0
CH	.794	SM	.794	SS	.605	MO	.815	CA	0
LP	.778	CH	.780	CH	.599	US	.795	CH	-2
LU	.757	LU	.751	LL	.592	CH	.783	LL	-2
CU	.721	CU	.735	MO	.590	SA	.782	US	-5
CA	.701	MO	.721	LP	.574	CA	.779	AH	-11
MO	.673	CA	.678	CA	.540	AH	.748	SA	-11
TOT	0.83	TOT	0.81			TOT	.81	TOT	

farmland is deceiving, given the actual level of development. The skewed land distribution disguises a much smaller than expected family farm segment.⁶³¹

Second, the post-war titling activity may have facilitated a reconcentration of more productive land through land market transfers. It is likely that contrary to the stated intent of the reforms, land re-concentration has been underway as land prices have skyrocketed and cooperative land is sold to pay off debt. Several laws beginning in 1991 have conditioned the parcelization of collective properties to debt cancellation. Decree Law 747 passed in 1991, permitted three options for transforming Reform Cooperatives into individual parcels. Incentives

⁶³¹ El Salvador still ranks well above most lower income Asian countries with average farm sizes near 1 hectare. The mean farm size used here may be less useful than the median farm size (for which fewer comparable international estimates are available). The mean farm size still underscores the weight of large farms that inflate the Salvadoran mean upward for a small, densely populated and only moderately industrialized country, for which a smaller average farm size would be more appropriate. Larger average farm sizes are found in more industrialized countries where labor costs are higher and agriculture plays a smaller, more specialized role in overall GDP. The EU average farm size, for example, is 19 ha, ranging from Norway (14 ha) to England (68 ha). U.S. average farm size is 173 ha. (USDA, 2005).

to privatize cooperative lands were strengthened in 1996.⁶³² Subsequent debt cancellation laws encouraged the sale of newly titled lands to pay reduced debt conditions. Decrees 698 and 699 were passed in May 1996, permitting the full cancellation of all debt up to about \$2000, and 70% cancellation of the rest, on the condition of “*pronto pago*,” or immediate payment, of the 30% debt balance. Of the Phase I beneficiaries, 10,000 (or less than a third) chose parcelization, despite the strong incentives of debt cancellation (Prisma 1996). The buyers of this land were most likely private housing developers or the region’s larger landowners.

It is also true that many medium size farms have been sub-divided into urban or semi-urban parcels for housing.⁶³³ Childress estimated that about 11,500 ha. of agricultural land was converted into urban plots between 1985-1993, and this process has since accelerated.⁶³⁴ Both urban development and creation of forest reserves take land from production. Neither improves the unequal distribution of land.

Although variation is relatively low, the region of greatest land inequality is that which surrounds San Salvador, including Cuscatlán, and coastal departments of San Vicente, La Libertad, and Sonsonate. Land distribution is somewhat more equal in the northern departments, Ahuachapán, Cabañas, Santa Ana and Chalatenango. Poverty, according to 1998 data, is highest where land inequality is lowest, suggesting that land alone is insufficient to raise incomes above the poverty level. Income inequality, on the other hand, is almost the reverse of the pattern shown in Figure 6.5. When the two types of inequality are compared, we see that where land ownership is relatively more equal (in the North) income inequality is higher. Where land inequality is highest (the region surrounding San Salvador), income disparities have been attenuated.

⁶³² Promising in 1989 to make El Salvador a “nation of landowners,” The Cristiani government issued decree 747 that provided incentives for cooperatives to parcelize their lands. The government emphasis on restoring the market mechanism in land transactions actually began in 1987, under the previous Christian Democrat administration, which issued Decree 839 encouraging the voluntary sale of properties to landless campesinos and urban developers by using a land market. Prior to the PTT in 1992, 6,041 properties for a total of 10,922 hectares had been voluntarily sold (Strasma, 1989, 1990; Seligson, et al, 1993, Table 3.1).

⁶³³ It is possible that more farms were broken up within both the large and medium strata than I conservatively assumed with only a 10% attrition rate (about 32,000 ha.), above and beyond the farmland that was subdivided through the PTT process. Further research is required to determine whether a higher rate is justified.

⁶³⁴ A small sample of land sales in 1992 suggested that the vast majority of transactions were less than 1.4 ha. (Childress et al. 1993).

If temporal estimates are valid, analysis of Table 6.7 suggests that while land inequality has improved in some of the most skewed departments (Ahuachapán, Santa Ana, La Libertad, Usulután), the reverse has occurred in departments that were previously more equal in relative terms (Cuscatlán, Cabañas, La Unión, Morazán). The Gini coefficient of San Salvador may have increased simply because greater numbers of large absentee landowners now reside there instead of on their respective farms.⁶³⁵ These changes are overshadowed by the extremely high inequality that in general persists throughout El Salvador.

A final point addresses the four possible exits from rural poverty – extensification, intensification, semi-skilled off farm labor and migration. Increasingly in the rural economy, the average weight of farm income (surplus from production) and farm wages (day laborer income) is not as large for most individual earners (and therefore farm households) as one might think. By decade's end, the proportion of household's that derived its principal source of income from agriculture is declining from about 40% to below 20%. For only about one third of the rural income earners, farm related income represents more than 50% of their total income.⁶³⁶ For farmers with access to land, farm related income only surpasses 50% of total monthly income when they have more than 10 hectares. Farm incomes in post-war El Salvador are depressed in general and diversification has clearly not raised incomes for the majority of small farmers. For the majority of the rural population, farm related income is relatively insignificant. The World Bank (2004) also found that the percentage of households that depended on agriculture as the principal source of income declined from 39% in 1991 to just 18% in 2002. Off-farm and remittance income are playing an ever larger role as coping strategies for many rural households, landowners and landless alike.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ Midlarsky (1988, 1999) has criticized the Gini coefficient as a sub-optimal measure of extreme inequality. He argues that the distribution of upper and lower segments of asset distribution under conditions of extreme inequality more accurately fit log-exponential or exponential curves, which in turn provide a better mechanism for explaining the inequality-violence nexus. In another study, I test for this pattern of extreme inequality at the department level but find no significantly different effect. See McElhinny and Seligson (2000).

⁶³⁶ Based on estimates drawn from the rural economically active population of the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM survey.

⁶³⁷ See also González-Vega, et al. (2004) and Rodríguez-Meza, et al. (2003)

5. The Impact of the Land Reform Process

Land reform leveled some of the inequalities in El Salvador's agrarian structure. A total of 21% of the adult farming population acquired the right to purchase 30% of El Salvador's available farmland.⁶³⁸ In spite of several major land reforms over a two-decade period and the expenditure of enormous effort and political capital as well as international and domestic funding, many landless peasants, often the poorest of the poor, have not gained access to land. Remarkably, while twenty years of land reform have decreased landlessness of those still employed in agriculture, few additional farmers as a percent of all eligible agricultural workers have secured guaranteed access to land.

The lower than expected participation in the PTT was in part due to design flaws in the land market, on which the PTT was based (Murray, et al. 1994: 23). First, in the Peace Accords both sides agreed that original property rights would be respected and occupiers would receive comparable lands to purchase through loans (\$3,450 to \$4,600 at 6% interest over 20 years). Where large properties were sold as single units, the FMLN would often have to orchestrate the placement of families willing to move to the farm. Post-war migration within the country and to the U.S. made permanent up to date beneficiary lists nearly impossible. Some relocated families abandoned the land due to incompatibilities with their new neighbors, or were in a different climate uncomfortable taking on debt. Other complications (unpaid back taxes, inability to locate owner, disputed ownership) also sidetracked negotiations between buyer and seller. Repeating a central flaw of the 1980 reform, titling proceeded very slowly and lack of confidence with the complex transaction forced some beneficiaries to back out. Over three years into the peace process, less than 50% of the prospective land beneficiaries had actually received land (Wood 1995: 56-57).

Other shortcomings of land reform can be seen in the areas of debt, credit, land prices, investments in complementary human capital and technology. Beginning in 1995, thousands of

⁶³⁸ By Latin American standards, the Salvadoran 1980 land reform ranks below Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua and Cuba but above Colombia, Chile, Brazil and Ecuador in terms of percent farm families affected. (De Janvry, *et al.*, 1989).

campesinos and their supporters organized by the *Alianza Democratica Campesina* (ADC), battered by drought and state indifference, began invading idle and *excedente* lands (above the constitutionally allowed 245 hectare limit).⁶³⁹ A joint investigation by ISTA and the U.N. was charged with investigating a list of some 452 properties that were believed to exceed the limit. Subsequent revision sanctioned by ISTA pruned the list to 95, after only four properties of the initial group were found eligible for redistribution. Peasant organizations claimed that 129 properties still exceeded the formal limit.⁶⁴⁰ The investigation proved futile in identifying significant new land for redistribution, although it shed some light on extent of dubious tactics to subdivide large properties under false holding companies.

Two decades of land reform left the agrarian sector buried under an accumulated debt of \$285 million with many thousands still landless.⁶⁴¹ In 1996, a broad coalition of agricultural organizations and producers, the *Foro Agropecuario*, formed to demand a resolution to the debt once and for all. At the beginning, some large groups of commercial farmers joined small farmers under the banner of debt forgiveness.⁶⁴² This cross-class coalition put debt on the agenda. In May 1996, ARENA passed a revised version of the 1991 law (Decree 747) that linked partial debt forgiveness to incentives for parcelization of cooperatives. Decrees 698, 669 and 719 approved 70% immediate debt forgiveness for Phase I and III of debt accumulated by the agrarian reform, PTT, and commercial borrowing, conditioned upon “pronto pago” (immediate payment) of the 30% balance before June 1997. Debts up to \$1,900 would be forgiven in full, and the balance would be eligible for the 70/30 program. Decree 719 made it

⁶³⁹ Kowalchuk (2000, 2004), Flores (1999). According to the 1983 Constitution, properties in excess of the 245 hectare limit would have to sell off or donate the excess land by Dec 20, 1986 or face expropriation. The U.N. (1997) investigated these properties with the assistance of peasant organizations such as the ADC.

⁶⁴⁰ Farms that were on duplicate lists had not been titled or transferred yet by ISTA, or had been declared natural protected areas, or did not reflect owner reserve holding rights, explaining some of the reductions. Conservative estimates of *excedente* land suggest that no more than 10,000 landless peasants could benefit from redistribution, but probably fewer.

⁶⁴¹ A 1996 study by PRISMA estimated the outstanding agrarian debt at 2.5 billion colones (about \$287 million). Of this, the cooperative sector owed over half (\$148 million), Phase III beneficiaries owed \$19.1 million, and the PTT beneficiaries, \$82.4 million, and the commercial sector, \$37.5 million. Agrarian debt is equal to the unpaid purchase price of transferred land plus interest, but can also include loans extended to cover production costs or infrastructure.

⁶⁴² Foley (1997) notes the robbery linked shooting of Ernesto Muyschondt in Oct. 1996, spokesperson for a group of disaffected commercial landowners from the Eastern region of the country, is suspected of being related to his discontent with the 1996 debt deal and negotiations with Foro Agropecuario.

possible for cooperatives to exempt themselves from debt or reduce individual obligations through parcelization or to raise funds through the sale of land (PRISMA 1996; Foley 1997). With the 1997 legislative elections approaching and unable to win a better deal, the FMLN supported these debt relief bills.

Orlando Arevalo (ex-Christian Democrat now ARENA legislator) had championed support for the 70% - 30% debt forgiveness plan among his centrist peasant constituency.⁶⁴³ Indeed, for Arevalo's base which included many Phase III *Finateros*, the average debt was less than the \$1,900 threshold and would be totally forgiven. A majority of PTT beneficiaries would likely have full debt forgiven as well. Most Phase I cooperatives were not financially able to make the 30% payment, and only 24 had done so by late 1996 (Foley 1997). Cooperatives found themselves under tremendous pressure to parcelize, and in so doing, would lose what little security that cooperative production and infrastructure provided.

FMLN gains in the 1997 elections that eliminated an ARENA working majority in the Assembly opened the way for negotiating a more far reaching debt proposal before the June 1997 deadline. After holding out for the cancellation of 100% of the agrarian debt, the FMLN, with the support of the Christian democrats, proposed a bill to forgive 93% of the agrarian debt owed to the government. The bill was vetoed by President Calderón Sol. The executive veto was nearly overridden, with almost two-thirds of national legislators favoring deeper debt forgiveness. ARENA's resistance succumbed to overwhelming protest by peasant gremios and a wide political consensus.⁶⁴⁴ On March 23, 1998 in a near unanimous vote, the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly moved to forgive 85% of the agrarian and banking debt for rural landholders after two years of debate and various attempts at developing legislative and Presidential agreement.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴³ The National Cooperative Federation of the Agrarian Reform, (CONFRAS), also initially backed the government's proposal in addition to Arevalo's CNC.

⁶⁴⁴ *El Diario de Hoy*, November 18, 1997, pg.1 and December 2, 1997, pg.1

⁶⁴⁵ The 85/15% formula was originally thrown into the public debate by ARENA leader Alfredo Cristiani in October 1997 as an attempt to stop the 93/7% formula. Cristiani's proposal, unlike the bill which passed on March 23, 1998 did not contemplate re-financing and would have meant immediate repayment of 15% of the debt. Conceding to the higher debt bailout did not prevent ARENA from capitalizing on this concession, as outgoing President Calderón Sol did when addressing an April 1999 convention of the Confederación Nacional Campesino to receive an award from Orlando Arevalo and urge the 5,000 peasants in attendance to repay the party with their vote.

Debt relief for all loans extended to beneficiaries of the Peace Accords whose debt was granted in full, and 85% of the government held, wartime debt of individuals or cooperatives was erased. The remaining 15% of the debt was to be refinanced at 6% over 12 years, or through the immediate payment mechanism.⁶⁴⁶

Debt cancellation avoided the probable default by numerous cooperatives and small farmers that would have re-concentrated land into the hands of the wealthy landowners. It also conceded the failure of land reform to reactivate an agricultural sector battered by the war and signaled ARENA's payoff to the agrarian elite within the party.

Debt forgiveness virtually ensured that the financial sector would close its doors to most farmers. The financial sector is highly concentrated, with four banks controlling two thirds of loan activity and with preferences for large institutional lending. The threat of renewed debt cancellation has choked off new lines of credit to already financially starved small-scale agriculture. Fewer than 20% of El Salvador's 220,000 small farmers have access to credit from the formal financial sector. Household survey data suggest that less than 10% of the economically active adult workforce in agriculture reported having credit in 1998, and about half of these producers relied on non-bank sources.⁶⁴⁷ Total credit allocated to agricultural activities has declined from 30% in 1980 to 13.5% in 1995. At least 70% of agricultural credit goes to coffee. The *Banco de Fomento Agropecuario (BFA)*, the principal instrument for rural finance, is nearly insolvent due to high volume loans in default, politicization of lending and

⁶⁴⁶ The total debt amounted to \$287 million and effected some 82,000 people. 75 out of 84 legislative deputies voted to support debt forgiveness. The laws cancelled 85% of the debt accumulated between 1980 and 1991, and the 15% remainder would be refinanced over 12 years, with a 2 year grace period. Any non-PTT debt accumulated between 1992-1996 also would be refinanced at 8% over a longer term, affecting 15,000 people. The 85% debt cancellation affected 35,000 persons. In addition to the debt forgiveness for parcelization reforms noted above, Decrees 262 and 263 were passed into law on April 2, 1998, canceling 100% of the PTT debt, benefiting some 32,000 demobilized ex-combatants and civilian supporters of the FMLN. In all, the 1998 decree reduced the collectible debt to \$46 million. Not covered were any and all debt acquired through non-governmental organizations. However, by mid-1999, less than 10% of the affected debtors had taken advantage of the new "pronto pago" offer of 15%. Agriculturalists were dealt another blow in November 1998, as Hurricane Mitch caused another \$125 million in damages. Another bill passed in February 1999 that would have cancelled 100% of the agrarian debt was also vetoed by then President Calderon Sol. See Kieffer (1996), PRISMA (1996).

⁶⁴⁷ DIGESTYC-EHPM (1998) household data analysis. Only 17% of all landholders reported credit in 1998, with a similar proportion relying on informal credit suppliers. These results are consistent with other studies that have reported that between 10-20% of rural households receive formal credit. Molina (1999: 45, 144) shows that one reason informal credit prevails in rural areas is the higher transaction costs of formal credit, between 2-3 times higher than informal credit. Lower transaction costs, however, do not mean that the full cost of the loan is lower.

corruption.⁶⁴⁸ Despite formal proposals for a rural development bank by producer organizations, no efforts have been made to decentralize rural credit provision.⁶⁴⁹

The World Bank and IDB loans have re-oriented post-war agricultural policies away from further compulsory redistribution, and more toward deregulating land markets.⁶⁵⁰ USAID and the World Bank have promoted land markets as an alternative to the expropriation of land. Titling of individual parcels of land became an urgent priority in the post-war period. For PTT, a compromise was reached between ARENA, the U.S. government and the World Bank, which prioritized individual property titles and the FMLN, which preferred collective property transfers and cooperative arrangement where feasible. Proindiviso tenancy was the compromise, but it would expire five years, until which the PTT land could not be broken up and titled or sold as individual properties.

However by 1998, a decade of reforms intended to privatize the cooperative sector and promote individual land holding had reduced incentives for collective production options and had substituted a land market rather than the state as the primary mechanism for land transactions. After five years, the crisis in agriculture fueled a demand for subdivision of proindiviso. In what has amounted to a substantively more participatory subdivision and titling process compared to the processes supervised by ISTA or FINATA, a variety of rural land use planning and ownership formulas were presented for consideration as part of the PTT parcelization process. Where strong local organizations are absent, the most popular choice among beneficiaries of the possible options has been a patchwork of individual homesteads that reflects little interest in collective production arrangements.⁶⁵¹ This result is consistent with the government's strong preference for individual ownership of all titled properties (Wood 1995: 340; Foley 1997: 18).

⁶⁴⁸ As of June 2000, 37% of the outstanding BFA debt was delinquent, a disproportionately large part of which was owed by a handful of favored clients. In 1999, only 43 clients (0.14% of the total) owed the BFA 28% of the total outstanding debt, while 21,000 others (66%) owed only 6.3% of the total debt.

⁶⁴⁹ Comité de Incidencia para el Desarrollo Agropecuario y Rural (CIDAR) (2001) mimeo.

⁶⁵⁰ See Foley and Thale (1997). The principal World Bank loan is the 1993 Agricultural Sector Reform and Investment Project (PRISA) for \$40 million, including \$16.5 million in government matching funds. PRISA was designed to modernize (downsize) state agrarian institutions. A follow-up IDB Agricultural Competitiveness loan in 2001 continued along these lines, targeting the privatization of the country's four irrigation districts.

⁶⁵¹ Interview, Antonio Alvarez, director of FUNDESA, the principal NGO that has administered the parcelization project, Feb. 20, 2000.

In the view of some peasant leaders, the combination of mounting debt and the emphasis on individual titles resulted in many land reform and Peace Accords beneficiaries selling parts or all of their newly titled land to pay off debt.⁶⁵² In addition to the general decline of agriculture, Molina (1999:86) points to several factors which explain the appeal of parcelization among reform beneficiaries, including: a) internal problems related to the mismanagement by cooperative boards of directors, which contributed to the widespread discrediting of the cooperative model; b) the beneficiaries desire to have an individual land title in their name so that they can pass it on to their children; c) the absence of an organization that could provide training and assistance in areas such as cooperative organization, management and accounting needed to run the cooperatives as competitive enterprises; d) pressures from some ISTA officials on cooperative members to parcelize and sell part of the land to pay for the agrarian debt; e) the speculative bubble in land prices which serve as an opportunity to pursue significant windfall profits in the short run.

Speculative pressures related to urban or tourist development as well as remittance flows have pushed land prices much higher in the post-war period, beyond what landless or land-poor peasants could ever afford.⁶⁵³ Consider that Phase I owners were reimbursed based on an average estimated land value of \$340 per hectare, and the PTT was designed on the assumption of average land prices of \$420 per ha., ranging from the lowest quality agricultural land located in northern Morazán valued at \$280 per ha., to top-grade land in the Lempa River Valley valued at \$1,000 per ha..⁶⁵⁴ By late 1996, land with road access in Morazán was selling for as much as \$4000-6500 per hectare.⁶⁵⁵ A study of 1,500 producers by Childress (1997) shows that land whose agricultural lease value for basic grains should be about \$1000 per ha., was selling at \$2,300 per ha.. Farms eligible for emergency municipal investments in housing, sanitation or

⁶⁵² Interview Miguel Aleman, CONFRAS, Feb. 1998.

⁶⁵³ The 1998 World Bank Rural Development Strategy also points to pent up demand for construction and government land purchases as additional factors causing the spike in land prices, adding (without evidence) that the post-peace upward trend of land prices is returning to pre-war levels (184).

⁶⁵⁴ Phase I average land value is from ISTA Land Registry Data. Other estimates are from U.N., 1995; *Diario de Hoy*, 6, Oct. 1992, p3

⁶⁵⁵ Interviews with property owners in Ciudad Segundo Montes, Morazán 1996. Reported cases of opportunistic collusion suggest that the price being demanded for land is inflated based on assurance that the state or international donors will subsidize the sale, after which the seller and buyer share the dividend.

roads have extracted much higher prices. A study by ISTA reported that 14 cooperatives that requested authorization to sell land estimated the selling price at \$12,000 per hectare in 1997 – an amount impossible for Salvadoran peasants to pay.⁶⁵⁶ A government study showed that the ratio of most-to-least expensive land that was to be purchased by the state jumped from a factor of 5 in 1992 to 13 in 1996 (MAG-OCTA 1996).

With the typically low agricultural incomes, speculation over parcelized reform property is most likely fueling a reconcentration and a return to higher land inequality.⁶⁵⁷ Molina notes the irony that land reform was designed with the intention of stabilizing rural migration to the U.S., but among other things, skyrocketing land prices have transformed reform beneficiaries into the most likely candidate to finance migration to the U.S. through the sale of land.⁶⁵⁸

Prices are not completely to blame for undermining the impact of land reform. Productivity can improve the profitability of farming, but is dependent on technology transfer through the investment in the stock of human capital, effective agrarian institutions and direct investment in infrastructure.⁶⁵⁹ Land reform was not accompanied by these investments. El Salvador's persistent deficit in human capital reflects the state's reluctance to invest in the reform beneficiary population, or the rural population in general. Household survey data for

⁶⁵⁶ Childress (1997) found that land near the airport in La Paz was reported to worth \$8,000 per mz. (\$5,600 per ha.) and land in the flat Pacific fringe in Usulután is reported to be worth an average of \$1725 per mz (\$1200 per ha.), close to \$7,000 per mz (\$4,800 per ha.) in Zapotitan, and \$4,000 per mz. (\$2,800 per ha.) of land planted in coffee. Molina (1999) gives the most extreme example of \$100,000 per manzana (\$141,000 per ha.) paid for highly prized land near the Pan American highway in the emerging industrial district of San Juan Opico.

⁶⁵⁷ This finding is in contrast to the World Bank's own evaluation of the liberalization process in El Salvador and Chile. Touted as a "model for the region," the World Bank's evaluation of recent land market reforms (www.worldbank.org/research/lap) argues that the evidence supports land market deregulation, "to allow land under inefficient management to be restored to productive uses. Feared land reconcentration did not take place. Instead, land holding sizes merged towards medium-size family farms, arguably the most efficient. This is similar to what happened in Chile in the last decade."

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with Javier Molina, CARE microfinance specialist, San Salvador, January, 1999, about land sales as a platform to finance migration.

⁶⁵⁹ The rural road deficit is illustrated in a 1994 study by FUSADES (see summary in World Bank, 1998:26-28), suggesting that a modest investment in the rehabilitation of 3100 km in rural roads would result in high payoffs to rural producers.

1998 show that functional illiteracy among farmers remains at 50% and some 36% reported no formal education.⁶⁶⁰

World Bank loan conditionality has slashed the number of state agronomists and irrigation experts, and the revised extension strategy is widely considered to have had little impact.⁶⁶¹ Of the 2,441 state extension employees, only 967 remained in 1997. Extensionists fell from 949 to 637, or 1 for every 313 farmers (MAG 1998). NGOs and the private sector were expected to fill the gap, often with less experienced agronomist and promoters.⁶⁶² As with credit, the number of farmers reporting access to technical assistance remains unsatisfactorily low and public spending on research has fallen dramatically.⁶⁶³ A two-tier system has evolved (or rather persisted) where large and medium growers access the best technology available from public and private agencies, while small farmers are forced to rely on under-funded and inadequately trained non-governmental organizations for technical assistance.

As Gurr (2000: 157) has argued with respect to a general pattern of policy intermediations in response to insurgent threats, the Salvadoran land reform has been inconsistent and expedient, often mixing limited and partly implemented reforms with repression and co-optation. These counter-insurgent motivations ensured that land reforms in El Salvador would do little to alter the country's unusually high land inequality.

Land reform, alone, has done little to improve rural livelihoods. This updated analysis of the agrarian structure has shown that the PTT has been the latest in several failed attempts to address land inequality through expropriative or market-based redistribution. The post-war period has in fact featured the accelerated abandonment of agriculture policy reforms by the Salvadoran state. Several points that attest to this conclusion bear repeating. 1) Agriculture has

⁶⁶⁰ Farmers were defined as those 16 or older, with at least half a manzana of land. The 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM estimated primary enrollment rates near 90% overall (81.5% for rural women). Enrollment rates dropped dramatically for high school level education. For population age 14-18, enrollment rates were 60% overall, 46% in rural areas, and 44% for rural women.

⁶⁶¹ Interview with John Horton, IDB, June 1999, and IDB (2001e) Project Profile I: Retooling Agro-Enterprise Program. See also PRISMA (1998), Foley (1997) and Fogaroli and Stowell (1997).

⁶⁶² IICA (1997) estimates the NGO and Farmer Cooperative Federations were supplying 386 technical specialists to the agricultural sector in 1991.

⁶⁶³ Survey results for 1995 show that less than 20% of farmers report having received any technical assistance. Real public expenditures in agricultural related research and development has fallen from \$ 3.5 million in the early 1980s to about \$1 million in 1994. World Bank (1998: 5).

declined to just one in five jobs as a source of primary employment. 2) Landlessness has diminished in the post-war period, but land security (land ownership or rental as a percent of agrarian occupations) has not improved. 3) Reduced landlessness is largely due to the exodus from agriculture rather than the modest increase in access to land, strongly suggesting that rural development strategies are dominated by migration from agricultural employment to the urban informal sector or the U.S., rather than the extensification, intensification or diversification of agriculture. 4) The estimated departmental Gini coefficients suggest that modest improvement in land distribution has occurred in some regions, while backsliding has occurred in others. The single owner 500 to 1000 hectare haciendas of the past are for the most part gone, but at the same time small and medium farms have become increasingly fragmented and urbanization has taken some prime farmland out of production. The result is a national land distribution pattern as skewed as the early 1970s.

This transition away from El Salvador's traditional agrarian economy was induced internally on one hand by the proliferation of some 80,000 maquila jobs around San Salvador, and by a steady decline in credit and investment in rural areas, particularly after 1995 when reconstruction aid flows dropped dramatically. The reasons for the lack of credit and investment in the rural economy are both financial and political. Low profitability and high risk were perceived to be associated with unclear land tenure in communities of newly organized PTT properties and mounting agrarian debt in the cooperative sector. Also, many families on the boards of directors of the principal banks were also the same families that had lost land to the FMLN in the post-war settlement.

A third factor was the neoliberal reform program that dismantled nearly all publicly subsidized price supports, credit subsidies, state marketing programs for agriculture and the defense of an overvalued exchange rate. A final factor that turned against rural investment was the decline in international terms of trade for traditional export crops (sugar, coffee, beef), which have fallen from an index of 107 to 87 (between 1995-2003).⁶⁶⁴ The crop price index for

⁶⁶⁴ BCR, 2005. Terms of trade deterioration was due in large part to the collapse in coffee prices. An almost fixed exchange rate of 8.75 colones to the dollar was staunchly maintained throughout the 1990s, despite the increasing flow of dollars via remittances. The inflow of dollars caused the appreciation of the local currency, also penalizing agricultural exports.

Salvadoran producers has declined 35% from its 1980 level.⁶⁶⁵ As a result, cotton had largely disappeared, sugar production has lost profitability, and coffee and beef prices collapsed at different points in the 1990s.

Post-war rural development initiatives were also handicapped by growing environmental vulnerability. Natural disasters (drought in 1993, 1994 & 1997, floods, 1992, 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2005 and two earthquakes in 2001) have disproportionately impacted the rural economy, hastening migration as an increasingly essential household survival strategy.⁶⁶⁶ In 1998, 2.5 million people (or 42%) lived in rural areas out of a total estimated population of 6 million. Of the 300,000 farms in the country, 80,000 landowners or renters reside in major cities. Many of the growing number of NGO professionals also live in urban areas and commute to rural communities on the weekends. There are only about 1 million rural incomes.

C. CONCLUSIONS

The political and economic implications of the Peace Accords triggered a profound recomposition within the principal insurgent and counter-insurgent political movements and their respective mobilization networks. ARENA traded political concessions to the FMLN in return for control over an economic reform process that privatized much of the state and dramatically lowered economic dependence on agriculture. El Salvador now ranks as one of the most open economies in Latin America. Despite El Salvador's showcase reputation as an economic success story, the results have been mixed. Persistently high inequality affirms that post-war policies have continued to benefit the few. Poverty reduction and macroeconomic stability have failed to

⁶⁶⁵ Agriculture share of GDP is highly influenced by price shifts in coffee, which are notably volatile. Agricultural exports as a percent of total exports also fell from 70% in the early 1980s to 28% in the early 1990s. Salvadoran Central Bank data, cited in Acevedo, Barry and Rosa (1995), see also World Bank (1998, Appendix 2), Foley and Thale (1997) and Pelupessy (1998)

⁶⁶⁶ Hurricane Mitch entered El Salvador from Honduras to the north as a tropical storm causing between \$300 million and \$1 billion in damages and taking 300 lives. Two earthquakes occurred in January and February 2001, causing over 1,000 deaths and \$1.6 billion in damage (12% GDP), leaving over 300,000 homeless. These earthquakes are comparable to the 1986 quake that killed 1,200 and caused \$1.2 billion in damages (CEPAL, 2001).

generate the expected levels of growth or investment. Migration, intensified by the abandonment of the rural economy, has produced costly side effects, including loss of human capital and social disintegration.

ARENA achieved its primary goal of social and political stability that allowed it to engineer the massive state privatizations that culminated in 1998. However, the political cost was an unsettling transition within the ruling coalition that favored the elites that had diversified their interests beyond agriculture, and punished those elites most dependent upon agrarian rents. The latter extracted political concessions to cushion their economic decline and resisted the distributive goals of peace process from within the key posts of post-war government. The restoration of civil authority over the military meant that enforcing the priorities of the party would require a more diverse set of collective action strategies. Decentralization was viewed by ARENA as a means to safeguard and expedite the privatization of the state and to stabilize its ruling coalition through the distribution of new selective benefits to dissident agrarian hardliners, but would open little new space for local actors.

The FMLN ceded control of the economy in exchange for political reforms and an economic reinsertion package for ex-combatants. Electoral gains, increasingly weighted by urban turnout, secured new legislative and municipal power and consolidated the FMLN's place as the principal opposition party. Backed by the United Nations Observer Mission, the FMLN has improved the accountability of key political institutions and has contributed to unprecedented contract monitoring and compliance with respect to the most contentious areas of the Peace Accords (demobilization, land transfer, funding pledges). However, recurrent internal divisions over political strategy have contributed to the failure to win the Presidency, which in turn has severely limited the FMLN's ability to advance alternative economic policies or to offer viable rural development options in particular. For much of the insurgent base, including many demobilized combatants in ex-conflictive zones, the PRN did little to improve the quality of life. Lacking the same normative incentives and institutional allies (e.g. the Catholic Church, strong gremios) to rally collective action in its base as during the war, the FMLN has also had to cede greater autonomy to new local actors (NGOs, municipal and community authorities) in order to shore up its own mobilization network. Decentralization and local economic development have provided the means for reinventing the principled incentives for collective action during the war

and for channeling significant resources to local actors as a platform to mount contentious challenges at the national level.

Greater political competition, social stability and relative economic gains, all features of the national context that have framed the debate over decentralization, nevertheless fail to obscure a second consequence of this shift in the post-war political opportunity structure - the accelerated decline of agriculture. The evidence presented suggests that policies adopted by successive ARENA governments have hastened the decline in the agrarian labor force and depressed the incomes of those still working in agriculture. Despite two decades of land reform, El Salvador continues to have surprisingly high levels of landlessness and land inequality. Of the possible rural development strategies that include diversification or intensification of agriculture, small farm families seem to be choosing migration.

Recomposition of insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks has played out differently. For ARENA, the fundamental shift was horizontal, between one faction of the Salvadoran oligarchy to another. Decentralization responded to the modernizing elite's top priority of safeguarding the economic reform package, but also to a steady effort to expand the party's base and to consolidate its control over large parts of the countryside. However, the mere promise of devolution of power to municipal authority plus the selective distribution of benefits to the hard-line agrarian elite were sufficient to maintain broad party loyalty and preserve the capacity to mobilize its rural base during elections. Control over the spoils of public office has enabled ARENA to manage the realignment of ruling coalition elites with lower political costs.

For the FMLN, the fundamental shift has been vertical, with new leaders ascending or entering politics from municipal office or the NGO field. The exclusion from state office and the impulse from below sparked the FMLN's promotion of decentralization as a central element in its electoral and economic strategy. Without the capacity to redistribute state patronage, the FMLN had to rely much more on the actual expansion and improvement of self-governance at the municipal level. While the ARENA strategy enriched the modernizers and placated dissenting elites, little space was opened for new local actors. The acquisition of political credibility in local governance by FMLN mayors, councils and NGOs opened unprecedented space within Salvadoran society and within the party itself for the inclusion of a new class of elites and interests.

This chapter begins to illustrate how insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks adapted wartime collective action strategies to an altered post-war political opportunity structure. In both FMLN and ARENA networks, competition between modernizing or reformist tendencies and more hard-line elites characterized the extent to which the party diversified its wartime reliance on hierarchy CA strategies. For ARENA, the reform of the military and the gradual disappearance of death squad violence forced a shift to alternative strategies for mobilizing support and sanctioning dissent. For the most part, the preferred CA strategy remained a top-down and clientelist approach. With the backing of the primary donors (USAID and IFIs) a hierarchy CA strategy was most evident in the insular and exclusive design of the PRN, and the defense of the economic reform program. Beginning with the Peace Accords, however, ARENA was forced to negotiate with international authorities (principally ONUSAL) and after 1997, an FMLN opposition over a wider cross-section of policy issues. Like the FMLN, ARENA adopted a tit-for-tat Contract strategy (e.g. delays in funding provision, foot-dragging on the purging of officers) regarding the implementation of the least desirable Peace Accords commitments. ARENA used the selective benefits derived from privatization and the distribution of government posts to maintain the discipline within the ruling coalition, as well as reward potential voters (extension of civic action campaigns). However, steady gains by the FMLN also forced a heavy investment in public relations (Market) strategies to shape voter sympathies. Still, the counter-insurgent repertoire of collective action strategies remain firmly embedded in a hierarchy approach which best characterizes empowerment by invitation.

In contrast, the FMLN faced two important challenges to reconstituting its mobilization network in the post-war period. The first was a loss of ideological unity in opposition to a single enemy and the second was the loss of monopoly control over the flow of resources to the insurgent groups. Having minimal control over the flow of post-war reconstruction funding and a weak political capacity in general, the FMLN was forced to abandon hierarchy CA strategies that dominated wartime decision making. Local CA strategies became the platform upon which national challenges to ARENA would be eventually mounted.

In effect, the transition to alternative CA strategies proved relatively easy because these alternatives had been cultivated over the past two decades. Investments in self-government, both at the municipal and community level, as well as the formation of NGOs to defend local interests, represented the two dominant post-war CA strategies. Depending on the local context,

both of these local CA strategies have coexisted, but varied between Community related contingencies (social norms, informality) or Contract bargaining within established rules.

VII. CHAPTER SEVEN: DECENTRALIZATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF INSURGENT AND COUNTER-INSURGENT EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES

The grand bargain embodied by the Peace Accords and the ensuing political and economic implications are the primary context for understanding the shifts in political opportunity have both opened and closed space for decentralization. In short, the political viability of the National Reconstruction Plan hinged on the participation of the beneficiary population. Decentralization was therefore viewed as the primary mechanism for ensuring this participation (MIPLAN 1991).

Indeed, right and left ideologies converged to endorse decentralization as a goal of post-war reconstruction. From below, NGOs, local organizations and municipal governments flourished during the final years of the war and claimed to represent local demands for greater democratic control over post-war reconstruction, thus reinforcing FMLN calls for devolution of resources and responsibilities. From above, beginning with the Cristiani administration, ARENA proposed the deconcentration and privatization of state functions that privileged a reorganization of state level agencies under the control of those local actors that remained loyal to the party's broader economic agenda. This confluence of interests contributed to the opportunity for post-war decentralization. In this chapter, I trace the shifts in the political opportunity structure that explain the rise of local government, NGOs and social safety nets as elements of insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies.

Given the opportunity defined by shifting elite alignments and an unfavorable rural economic environment of high inequality, how have rural populations overcome collective action problems to make decentralization work? Competing approaches that have featured stabilizing, top-down decentralization versus regime challenging, contentious and bottom-up decentralization represent extensions of the wartime counter-insurgent and insurgent strategies to the post-war period. The emergence of local institutions in post-war El Salvador illustrate these two rival models of decentralized empowerment. The government viewed the PRN as

subservient to the higher priority market reforms that had been carefully insulated from all post-war negotiations. The FMLN and many organizations associated with the reconstruction of insurgent controlled regions of the country expressed much higher expectations that the PRN should be the means for a viable rural economy rooted in a vision of human liberation.

At the same time, decentralization was a product of civil war, conditioned by twenty year contest between insurgent and counter-insurgent forces. Wartime decentralization involved two very different empowerment strategies to solve collective action problems - strategies of empowerment through conflict in FMLN zones of influence and empowerment by invitation in government zones of influence. These same strategies have been adapted to political opportunity of post-war decentralization, and have shaped an array of new local institutions and leaders that in turn have anchored post-war mobilization networks. ARENA pushed decentralization from above, reinvented constantly as an alliance with rural and local actors, but mostly as an additional means for removing the state from the market and delegating the residual administrative duties to local government. The FMLN organized local forces to demand both fiscal and administrative (although not political) decentralization from below as corrective to a clientelist, often corrupt central administration of public resources.⁶⁶⁷

What allowed decentralization to even get off the ground as a national issue was a shared disdain for the ineffectiveness and corruption in the public sector. The impetus from the right and left to empower local institutions and leaders gave decentralization a political constituency within the panoply of national reconstruction issues.

A question raised in this chapter is whether the proliferation of NGOs has increased non-elite bargaining capacity. Have NGOs contributed to empowerment or have they merely provided a substitute for ineffective or exclusionary government services. A contest that began in the 1970s to win over the "hearts and minds" of the rural population foreshadowed the rise of the NGO along with municipal government as the two dominant and competing forms of social and political organization in postwar reconstruction. Donors took sides by funding either municipal government and social safety net programs on the right (in the case of several bilateral donors, mainly USAID) or NGOs working in conflictive zones on the left (in the case of

⁶⁶⁷ Carey (2003: 43-34) provides a list of thirteen political reforms that would largely transfer power from the party to the voter. Some FMLN Congressional leaders have opposed reforms that would eliminate an open list ballot (as opposed to closed lists indicated by party symbols) and single member districts, although the FMLN tends to favor the other reforms.

many European aid agencies). Communities in zones of wartime FMLN control supported NGOs and reserved hostility for many mayors. This pattern of institutional preferences was reversed in zones of government control. NGOs allied with the FMLN have tended to prioritize contentious collective actions to demand among other fulfillments of the Peace Accords, expropriative redistribution of assets. Controlled until recently by ARENA or PCN mayors, municipalities have tended to emphasize conventional modes of participation and gradual improvements in public services.

Complicating the NGO-local government competition that resulted from wartime empowerment strategies, significant shifts within the NGO sector itself reveal how these organizations have been accommodated into competing strategies of empowerment by invitation or empowerment through conflict. The spectrum of Salvadoran civil society organizations, within which NGOs carry most weight, have had a tremendous influence on post-war development, both at the local and national level. As many as 200 INGOs have channeled as much as \$30 million per year to some 500 NGOs in El Salvador during the height of post-war reconstruction funding. However the evolution of the NGO sector (which refers to the complex network of linkages between donors, NGOs and gremios) also reflects of the shifting balance of political opportunity described in the previous chapter.

Post-war reconstruction revealed the absence of any clear division of labor among local institutions. The improvisation of local institutional roles contributed to growing tension within the sector between NGOs and gremios. NGOs represent a Contract collective action strategy. Formal organizations are strategies to improve individual bargaining capacity for development resources within an accepted set of constraints. Gremios represent a Community collective action strategy. Rooted in common values, gremios tend to be less formal but more representative of a defined membership. Collective action among gremios is more contingent upon group solidarity. While NGOs initially emerged as service providers, many have encroached upon the political space previously reserved for gremios. Under pressures to professionalize and through the crowding out of gremios, NGOs have contributed to a depoliticization of this space.

The chapter will be organized in three parts. In the first section, I explore in broad brush strokes, recent historical trends in the emergence of civil society organizations and local government. In sections two and three, I explain how decentralization was accommodated as an

instrument of post-war counter-insurgent and insurgent empowerment strategies. I conclude by summarizing the evidence illustrating how within competing empowerment strategies, municipal governments and NGOs evolved on different tracks and coordination between them has become a central issue.

A. THE UN-CIVIC ORIGINS OF NGO-MUNICIPAL COORDINATION IN EL SALVADOR

Local institutions have a long, yet poorly understood history in El Salvador.⁶⁶⁸ To appreciate the post-war changes in Salvadoran civil society, parallel to the revival or reinvention of municipal government, an abridged timeline of how NGOs, INGOs and gremios have co-evolved in the past half century will help fill in this picture.

For most of the 20th century, Salvadoran civil society has been militarized and civil society organizations along with local government have functioned in complement to or as an extension of the state's police function, particularly within the country's rural periphery. Prior to the 1960s, civil society was divided between elite benevolence, social and professional associations, spiritualist Catholic groups (*Caballeros de Cristo Rey*, *Orden de Maria*), and the dangerous classes that threatened social order. E.A. Wilson documents the existence of social and ethnic clubs (casinos), labor federations (*las ligas rojas*), indigenous *cofradías*, and special interest associations that were flourishing prior to the 1932. Typical of these was the San Salvador casino which boasted the membership of 429 elite families in 1929 that probably enjoyed joint membership in the Salvadoran Country Club and possibly in the *Circulo Militar*.

Adams traces the proliferation of casinos to larger rural towns in the 1940s and 1950s, noting that Jucuapa, Usulután had three of these social clubs, one for each class. The *Casino Jucuapense*, composed of local upper class people (provincial elites), and the *Casino*

⁶⁶⁸ This section draws from a longer unpublished paper on the evolution of Salvadoran civil society, presented in 2000 at an ARNOVA Conference. Historical sources include Richard Adams (1957), E.A. Wilson (1969), González (1992) Montes (1984). More recent civil society sources include UNDP 1992 Registry of NGOs; Fundación Arias 1998 Directory of Central American NGOs; El Salvador Ministry of Interior; The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center (1988); Montoya (1996), USAID (1996) and other USAID documents, NGO and INGO websites and annual reports.

Democrático, of middle class people, each had a jukebox, while the *Casino Juvenil*, a lower class club, could not afford one (Adams 1957: 467). Add to these the local sports clubs, patron feast committees, indigenous *cofradías*, Ladino sodalities, and *sociedades de obreros*, and one is left with an image of relatively vibrant stock of rural social capital that nevertheless served to reinforce social stratification and was compatible with clientelist agrarian labor relations.⁶⁶⁹

What little information we have about local development associational activity during this period suggests that the membership centered on elites or the middle classes and activity was limited to charity functions modeled after or consisting of federated chapters of U.S. groups, including the National Anti-Tuberculosis Fund, Alcoholics Anonymous, various Societies of Wives of the Professions, Friends of Culture, Friends of the Earth, and the National Federation of Parent's Societies. The focus of these groups was cultural or philanthropic, but largely paternalistic in character and strictly apolitical, aiming at assisting individuals or families rather than addressing community-wide or broader social problems (Gonzalez 1991: 44).

The revolutionary tumult that elicited the Alliance for Progress also stimulated the formation of humanitarian service oriented organizations, whose aim was the improvement of education and health services. Often following a U.S. model, chapters of northern based federated civic associations were opened in El Salvador during the 1960s and 1970s. These included such groups as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Lions Club, International Executive Service Corps, the Salesian Brothers Association and the Salvadoran Demographic Association – (established in 1960 to council parents in family planning). Here, Alliance for Progress programs joined forces with the newly founded Christian Democratic Party and a renovating impulse within the Catholic Church to address rural poverty. Food for work programs were administered by CARITAS, the social service arm of the international Roman Catholic Church, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an international relief oriented NGO. Rural cooperative assistance was provided by Foundation for the Promotion of Cooperatives (Funprocoop), and then directly by USAID to the *Union Comunal Salvadoreño*. Although these initiatives mark a shift in the work of the church toward structural change, mutual aid and anti-communism continued to define this deepening of rural associational activity. Gonzalez (1991: 42)

⁶⁶⁹ Adams (1957:491) estimates an indigenous population of 400,000 in El Salvador for 1950, although many had divested themselves of the distinctive cultural traits to become what the author refers to as the “New Ladino.”

underscores the counter-insurgent objectives of these programs that redirecting organizational energy from socio-political concerns toward service provision.⁶⁷⁰

With the expansion of the Central American Common Market, the 1960s witnessed a spike in the formation of business associations, reflecting the emergence of a Salvadoran industrial elite. The origins of the oldest planter associations (coffee and sugar) date back to the 1930s.⁶⁷¹ With the formation of ANEP, the peak business confederation in 1966, El Salvador experienced the creation of trade associations for each industry. At the same time, increasing union activity and political competition by the late 1960s elicited a concerted counter-insurgent mobilization of civil society to pacify growing unrest.⁶⁷² Alliance for Progress policies promoted the formation to two types of conservative civil society groups. The first was rooted in the more hard-line anti-communist segments of the elite. The *Organización Nacionalista Democrática* (ORDEN), was established in 1967 as a rural paramilitary network of informers and thugs commanded by the military and the more reactionary elements of the Salvadoran right and would become one of the most important civil society organizations in the pre-war period.

⁶⁷³

Secondly, a slew of small betterment associations, private sector charity foundations and development NGOs formed during the 1970s – a period of crumbling political stability. Like the industrial elite that never quite managed to establish political autonomy or economic concessions from the reactionary landed elite, this apparent pre-war expansion of civic activity was swept aside. What began in the 1960s as a reformist movement within USAID and the Catholic Church collided head on with the Salvadoran oligarchy, resulting in the polarization and

⁶⁷⁰ The Episcopal Church also created two important social development NGOs during this period, the Christian Family Rehabilitation Center (1968) and the Center for Economic Development and the Spiritual Recuperation of Man (1972).

⁶⁷¹ Some of the most influential associations include Asociación Cafetalera, 1929; ABECAFE, 1930; Asociación Azucarera, 1931; Asociación Ganadería, 1932, Cooperativa Algodonera, 1940.

⁶⁷² Two confederations of public worker and manufacturing unions were organized in the early 1950-1957 under the Confederación General de Trabajadores Salvadoreños (with ties to the Communist Party) and the Confederación General de Sindicatos (with ties to the PCN), but broad based work stoppages did not occur until 1967.

⁶⁷³ ORDEN was similar to the *Asociación Cívica Salvadoreña*, a network of some 2100 local patriotic committees that served a similar function in 1932. One major difference was that the former included many of the poorest peasants as their only hope for upward mobility, while ACS charged a membership quota which effectively made it more of an elite club, although equally brutal. McClintock (1985).

politicization of civil society and local government. Between 1975 and 1980, Salvadoran civil society became increasingly divided between the social and political forces of the right and left. Centrist Christian Democratic interests lost influence as the military regime grew increasingly intolerant of legal political opposition. In this period, El Salvador experienced a watershed in political organization as social demands met with systematic repression. Socially marginalized groups concentrated political activities within mass organizations on the left (*Bloque Popular Revolucionario*) before severe repression carried out by other mass organizations on the right (*Frente Agrario de la Region Oriente*) and ORDEN, eliminated many of former. Nevertheless, many of these gremios represented unprecedented political empowerment through widely coordinated disruptive activities.

As the country slid into civil war, many civil society leaders on the left were killed, escaped into exile, or joined the insurgent FMLN. Similarly, wealthy and middle class families alike sent their children abroad and withdrew from public life. As civil society was drained of many of its most talented human resources and political space, association growth fell flat between 1980-84, with the exception of agricultural cooperatives. The 1980 land reform created some 80,000 beneficiaries, about half of which were then organized into cooperatives. Federations of all political stripes, but most loyal to the Christian Democrats, formed to represent the *cooperativistas*, accounting for some of the growth in gremios during the early 1980s. These agricultural gremios eventually drifted away from the Christian Democrats and shifted their support either to the FMLN or ARENA

An oversupply of unemployed professionals and dissident intellectuals swelled the ranks of relief and development organizations. With the proliferation of local NGOs serving in various support roles to internal and externally displaced communities, many of these organizations also adopted political goals, aligned to some extent with the FMLN but dedicated to the specific goal of rebuilding civil society in El Salvador. While many of these organizations actively channeled assistance and received direction from the FMLN high command, within the community of local emergency organizations working in El Salvador during the war, there existed a range of political views and relative autonomy with respect to alignment with the FMLN, the government or a neutral pragmatism.

International NGOs flooded El Salvador during the civil war, striking alliances with key actors in both insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks. International donors of

the right and left were largely negligible prior to 1979 in comparison to donor NGOs of the center (including groups whose political orientations are undefined). However, beginning in the 1980s, the struggle between protagonist forces in El Salvador was effectively transnationalized, both in terms the Cold War struggle among rival donors and the increase in Salvadoran migration to the U.S..⁶⁷⁴ Of the largest 170 INGOs identified in El Salvador, two thirds arrived after 1979, 33% have ties to the FMLN, 16% have ties to the PDC, 13% have ties to ARENA, and 38% have no political ties.⁶⁷⁵

USAID strategically recruited international NGOs for assistance in implementing its counter-insurgent civic action programs beginning in 1983. Accepting AID funds was conditioned on explicit or implicit support for counter-insurgent goals. International donor NGOs from center to right on the political spectrum accepted AID funds and participated in relief activities supportive of civic action programs.⁶⁷⁶ The neoliberal think tank, FUSADES, and its family of 38 right wing NGOs perhaps best represents the U.S. preference for civil society alternative to insurgent organizations.

The competition among international donors dissipated noticeably after the Cold War ended in 1989, as donor interests shifted to other crises and Central America became less compelling from a political or humanitarian standpoint (Mujal-Leon 1989; Biekart 1994). One indicator of this decline is the fact that Sister City relationships between U.S. and Salvadoran cities reported by one NGO that administers these ties fell from 75 in 1992 to 24 in 2000.⁶⁷⁷ The resurgence of new interest among international NGOs after the 1992 signing of the peace accords does not reflect prior ideologically polarized commitments of aid. While the Salvadoran left has

⁶⁷⁴ One study of Holt (1988) cited in Gonzalez (1991:53) estimated that by 1988, as many as 100 international donor NGOs had installed themselves in Central America, channeling as much as \$200-250 million in resources annually. Local NGOs formed during this same period were estimated at 600, providing services to some 5 million Central Americans, perhaps 20% of the region's population.

⁶⁷⁵ Description of the data is given in McElhinny (2000a).

⁶⁷⁶ International NGO allies of USAID during the war included CARE, Project Hope, World Concern, Catholic Relief Services, the International Rescue Committee, the Family Foundation of America, OEF International, Knights of Malta, AIFLD, Technoserve, NRECA, CLUSA, CREA International, Save the Children, as well as various Evangelical Institutions. Key national NGOs included the Salesian Society, CALMA, the Telethon Foundation, CESAD, Fundasal, COMCORDE, AGAPE, Corporación Fe y Trabajo, FUSAI, FEPADE, FUNDASALVA, and CONVITEC. See GAO (1992).

⁶⁷⁷ Correspondence with Adam Flint, *Ciudades Hermanas*, Nov. 1, 2000.

continued to depend almost exclusively on international NGO assistance, the government has relied more than ever on multilateral and bilateral funding and remittances.

Following the Salvadoran civil war, it would be no surprise to find a civil society depleted and unable or unwilling to assume its critical role in any post-war political system. However, observers of the peace process in El Salvador have called attention to the rapid growth of NGOs along with the strengthening of local government as evidence that civil society groups are effectively “empowering” ordinary citizens to hold the state accountable (Bennett 1995; Blair, Booth, Córdova and Seligson 1995). Political liberalization and the greater availability of external funding spurred a wave of growth in the formation of associations to address all aspects of national reconstruction.

Despite the tremendous human costs and continuity of violence in the post-war period, Salvadoran civil society has experienced a remarkable associational fluorescence in the last decade, in many ways unlike any other phase of civil society growth that preceded it. The past fifty years have seen a slow steady, but increasingly politicized increase in organizational growth through 1979, which was then stunted in the darkest days of the civil war violence (1980-84). The aggregate trend rises again in the late 1980s as political freedoms were restored, only to turn sharply upward in the post-war period of 1990 to the present.⁶⁷⁸ More Salvadoran groups have formed since 1992 than in the previous three decades combined.⁶⁷⁹ The 5,000 non-governmental organizations that are currently registered with the Salvadoran government, represent an overall organizational density of 0.8 per 1000 Salvadorans.⁶⁸⁰ If an estimated 2,000 community development groups (*Asociaciones de Desarrollo Communal*, ADESCOs), 1,750 local school reform committees (*asociaciones comunales educativos*, ACE), water users associations, sports teams, women’s committees, informal religious groups (1,500 Catholic parishes, 3,300 Evangelical Churches, or Christian Base Communities), organizational density spikes to 2.0 per

⁶⁷⁸ Based on estimates of organizational growth in McElhinny (2000a)

⁶⁷⁹ Registered NGOs were reported to be 732 in 1992, 2025 in 1996 and 5,000 in 2005. Source: Communication with Ministry of Interior/Gobernación, Nov. 2005. This suggested pattern is similar to that illustrated in the graph of NGOs by year of Ministry certification shown in UNDP (1992: 487), although the missing organizations (some 2,000 or more) from the UNDP list do not accurately reflect the shifts that I mention.

⁶⁸⁰ This statistic doesn’t include *Asociaciones de Desarrollo Comunal* (ADESCOS). Only 40 such ADESCOS were formed during an ill-fated effort between 1980-1984. Some 1,403 ADESCOS were registered by 1994 with an average of 30 members per ADESCO. Ministerio de Interior (1994a).

1000.⁶⁸¹ The relative change between the anemic organizational growth in El Salvador during the 1960s compared to the frenetic associational activity of the 1990s, by itself, is an impressive change. By some criteria, we would expect to find democratic dividends on this considerable deposit of social capital (Putnam 1993).

How might we characterize the influence of the NGO sector? One factor is how much NGOs now contribute to overall financial capital investment in democratic development? A study by a local NGO estimates that the U.S. and European NGO community alone account for \$46 million in investment and constitute 6000 jobs.⁶⁸² In a smaller survey of 80 Salvadoran associations/NGOs in 1995, Foley and Hasbún report that the average number of NGO employees was 27, and the average budget during 1994 was \$300,000, of which two thirds passed through as project investments (Foley, Hasbún, Córdova 1995: 24). Based on a conservative extrapolation of this data for the entire NGO sector, total employment by NGOs in the mid-1990s would be 12,500 and total budgetary resources would be \$50 million.⁶⁸³ Compare this to an estimated 23,000 state employees that were fired since 1991 after privatization, or the 11,000 current municipal employees and total municipal budget of \$80.⁶⁸⁴ Considering that the total number of public employees in 1994 was 122,881, the NGO and municipal sectors represent 12% and 9% of the total public sector labor force, respectively.

The proliferation of NGOs since the mid-1980s also defies clear ideological classification. Clearly, this rapid expansion of civil society has departed from the mass organization form of the 1970s, toward a smaller, less encompassing form today. The dominant trend has been an increase in NGOs or INGOs without links to any broader horizontal federation or placement within vertical or international structures. These groups tend to represent single

⁶⁸¹ These estimates are based on unconfirmed government and denominational sources. DIDECO is the source on ADESCOS, most have formed since 1990, increasing from an estimated 718 in 1994 to over 2000 by late 1990s. See Orellana, et al. (1999: 149).

⁶⁸² PRISMA (1996). The 1992 UNDP registry of 186 NGOs reported a total employment of 6,014 (ave. 32.3). Although only 16 NGOs accounted for 50% of these jobs, with AGAPE Association employing 710 at the time.

⁶⁸³ I conservatively use 500 NGOs, an average of 25 employees, and an average budget of \$100,000. This reflects a widely recognized attribution within the NGO sector after the PRN.

⁶⁸⁴ Over 40% of the total municipal budget and 31% of municipal employees pertain to San Salvador. Municipal employee estimates are from Nickson (1990:75) for 1994. Privatization has led to the downsizing of 6,700 employees at MOP, as well as hundreds more at ANTEL (telephony) and CEL (energy).

community or single-issue associations. It is these types of civil society groups to which Putnam pointed in tracing the economic and political success of the Northern Italian regions. However, Salvadoran NGOs have weak or no ties to any other organizations other than their respective donors or membership. Very few new regional development NGOs have formed since 1992. Similarly, the growth in internationally federated clubs and chapters that were popular before the war also remains low, and has dropped sharply after 1992.

The prevalence of small, disconnected NGOs tends toward an emphasis on horizontal, within-group ties, and to de-emphasize the importance of between-group ties or vertical ties with the state. The vast majority of these newly formed NGOs do not engage in political advocacy and collective action strategies tend toward individual or community targets, rather than structural or policy issues.⁶⁸⁵ Especially where political institutions are weak and structures of inequality are entrenched, as they are in El Salvador, the proliferation of small groups may leave civil society less able to coordinate collective action in contentious defense of political or economic rights.

Local NGO growth has eclipsed gremios as the fastest growing type of civil society organization. Prior to 1960, private sector and professional gremios largely aligned with the right far outnumbered those aligned with the left, center or politically undefined groups. However, by the 1970s, the sharpest increase in gremio formation was among groups of the left and right, who had achieved relative political parity by 1979. After 1979, the gremio formation rate fell dramatically across the political spectrum, with the exception of the left, which experienced resurgence after a restoration of some civil liberties in 1984, and again after the conflict ended in 1992.

Gremios assumed an unparalleled importance during the 1970s. This shift from mutual aid or benevolence associations in the 50s and 60s to broad based human and economic rights coalitions in the 1970s reveals a pre-war experience of empowered civil society groups, forming both horizontal ties to link a diversity of groups as well as vertical ties to the state. While more groups were forming than ever before, a wide variety of groups folded their actions into larger, hierarchical organizations. These same horizontal and vertical ties to the state were strengthened among civilian and paramilitary organizations on the right.

⁶⁸⁵ Crosby, et al. (1997: 36-37) Foley, Hasbún and Córdova find that less than a third of their 1995 NGO sample engage in political advocacy, and only about 1 in 10 promote inter-agency coordination.

Another indicator that the increase in local NGOs seems to have come at the expense of gremios is suggested by the steady decline in total number of active unions, which have dropped from 127 to 103 between 1975 and 1993 (Fitzsimmons and Anner 1998; Aguilar Guillen 1999). Union affiliates as a percent of the economically active population have also dropped from about 5% to about 3%. Salvadoran unions have decayed for a variety of reasons, not least of which is their dependence on external funding and political ties to the left and right. However, the implicit tradeoff within civil society between highly politicized gremios and disparate, single-issue associations constitutes a shift toward a more accommodative civil society. This shift also reinforces a reorientation from between-group and vertical ties to within-group ties.

In sum, the evolution of Salvadoran civil society over the past five decades, very much rests on the experience of mass collective action and periods of sustained confrontation with authorities despite the certainty of repression. On the one hand, this foundation defies the logic of pluralist democratic theorists such as Putnam, who posit the slow, non-conflictive accretion of social capital through the face to face encounters within small associations. Here civilians confronted the praetorian state face to face in the streets and suffered tremendous repression as a result. However, a solid foundation of social capital was nevertheless produced in the increasingly violent, politicized struggles in which civil society and local government were often at odds. On the other hand, the notable trend toward more accommodative and less politicized civil society activity may support Putnam's thesis in the medium term.

How has this legacy of social capital formation been appropriated by insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies in the context of post-war decentralization?

B. EMPOWERMENT BY INVITATION

In parts of the countryside under government rule during and after the war, Salvadoran peasants experienced empowerment by invitation, which involved the tradeoff: accommodation of local inequality in return for options to escape conflict. If a community actively resisted the FMLN

and provided support to the Salvadoran military, victimization by state sponsored violence was considerably less. In exchange for loyalty, the government promised protection from FMLN attacks, resources for reconstruction and development and recognition as patriotic defenders of the nation – even if most of these selective benefits were undersupplied. In effect, this exchange constituted empowerment by invitation – a coerced contract between peasant clients and the patron state to withhold support for the insurgents. This counter-insurgent empowerment strategy shaped the post-war bargain around a similarly styled (if not imposed) consensus for reconstruction. Participation of the poor would be confined to non-threatening activities that effectively disregarded local inequality and was rewarded with projects. Out of this conceptualization of empowerment emerged the counter-insurgent local institutions that were incorporated into ARENA's vertical post-war mobilization network.

Reflecting ARENA's political advantage, post-war decentralized development in El Salvador has generally favored this top-down, stabilizing, empowerment by invitation approach, which has effectively excluded from the domain of citizen participation in the reconstruction huge areas of policy making and specific political tactics that had been at the core of the civil war. Citizens are invited by ARENA to participate only in those matters considered politically safe and therefore often irrelevant. In doing so, Salvadoran elites attempted to resurrect the pre-war political tradition of mixing coercion with clientelism to preserve their authority in areas that were considered off-limits to most Salvadorans. In the empowerment by invitation approach to decentralization, elites have legitimized conventional and non-violent forms of political expression and actively discredited contentious forms of challenge to their historic political and economic privilege.⁶⁸⁶

The programs of post-war reconstruction and their professional staff were expected to revive civil society's original, hard-working but acquiescent character through a process of incremental, non-conflictive change.⁶⁸⁷ This counter-insurgent decentralization strategy found support among a wide sector of the rural population whose preferences for stability; peace and

⁶⁸⁶ This authoritarian regime was no doubt formed in response to recurrent peasant rebellions in the 1830s, 1880s, and 1930s, each of which posed modest threats to centuries of oligarchic rule and were brutally often repressed. Anderson (1971), Montes (1980), Alvarenga (1996), Lauria-Santiago (1998).

⁶⁸⁷ In other words, this view holds that civil society has been contaminated by the extremist, ideological influence of the FMLN, and to a much lesser degree by the intolerant violence propagated through paramilitary death squads organized by far right.

individual freedom outweighed those of equity, accountability or more substantive participation in decision making processes.

In stark contrast to the radical devolution of state assets to the private sector, more far reaching fiscal, administrative or political decentralization has encountered stiff resistance in El Salvador. The political system dominated by right wing or military authority remains highly centralized. ARENA concentrates all priority decision making within the party's 15 member executive council (COENA), which appoints candidates for local and national office. Under this vertical system without internal primaries, local voters have almost no inter-election influence in ruling party decisions. Political reforms to deepen democracy in El Salvador, beyond those conceded in the Peace Accords have been vigorously and successfully opposed by ARENA and the PCN and other itinerant smaller third parties.⁶⁸⁸ This opposition to political decentralization dates back to ARENA's undermining of the PDC sponsored implementation the municipal code reforms after attaining a legislative plurality in 1988. Local electoral reforms in particular have proven futile largely because ARENA and the PCN mayors, councils and a network of private contractors rule in over 200 of the countries 262 municipalities, and are disinclined to give up even minute quotas of power.⁶⁸⁹

Counter-insurgent decentralization was designed to restore a modicum of electoral democracy at the national level, to recapture local political authority and to undermine the legitimacy of the FMLN through top-down reconstruction programs. The main government pacification programs were fused in 1992 to create the Secretariat for National Reconstruction (SRN), in which ARENA agreed that the municipal government play a central, but subservient and executing role. Greater responsibility for public service provision was delegated to local government, but the purse strings remained tightly controlled by a central government, now leaner as a consequence of privatization but still highly politicized (Rodriquez 1999; Orellana

⁶⁸⁸ See Carey (2003). More accurately, ARENA has ensured the loyalty of PCN by refusing to table these reforms, many of which favor the third party, including changes to the proportional representation formulas (until 2006), extending suffrage to Salvadorans living abroad, campaign finance transparency, aggregation of low income municipalities, open-list PR elections at the municipal level, public voting records, public hearings and sequential nomination for prominent appointments. PR elections of municipal councils was proposed by opposition parties prior to the 1994 elections, specifically allowing the winning party half of council seats with the mayor's vote capable of ensuring a working majority. ARENA opposed it. Montgomery (1995: 311, fn 51)

⁶⁸⁹ Of course FMLN mayors can be found that are equally self-interested, but both the disproportionate number of rightwing mayors and the relative openness to political reform by FMLN mayors suggest that the political resistance emanates from the former.

1997; Morales Ehrlich 1995; Murray 1994; Nickson 1995). While the principal goals of the SRN were to integrate some 50,000 ex-combatants into Salvadoran society and address the reconstruction needs of the most devastated municipalities, the early allocation of projects reflected a perceived bias against FMLN communities.⁶⁹⁰ Unaccountable government influence over reconstruction programs forced several European donors, including the EU, to channel its post-war assistance around the SRN and directly to NGOs working in conflictive zones and refugee camps (in the case of many European aid agencies).⁶⁹¹

Local development initiatives under the Cristiani administration beginning in 1989 were also firmly rooted in the neoliberal framework being advised by the multilateral banks and USAID. Market reforms that raised the price of basic services and food staples but removed public subsidy programs, required decentralized compensatory strategies that recruited local actors in service delivery, poverty reduction programs and quieting local discontent. Local participation was channeled into the conventional and pre-determined parameters of state administered social safety net programs.

As a top-down strategy, ARENA's approach to decentralization focused disproportionately on a hierarchy of state level institutions in which power was concentrated at the top. Within this scheme, highest priority was assigned to the state assets to be privatized (banks, telecommunications, energy). The second tier included state agencies with authority over local actors. However, competition within the ruling elite and donor community over the prospects of political capture of the spoils of reconstruction, led to the creation of parallel institutions performing similar functions but accountable to different elite constituencies. Below this level, mayors were only cautiously and selectively incorporated to the near exclusion of

⁶⁹⁰ Yariv and Curtis (1992), Murray, Coletti and Spence (1994), Stanley (1993), Spence and Vickers (1994), Sollis (1993), WOLA (1994). A 1992 GAO report challenges the claims of political bias against opposition NGOs, but confirms many of the obstacles that unnecessarily prevented greater FMLN NGO participation. Despite spending considerable resources to counter these charges, USAID funded evaluations of the MEA program have effectively conceded to these arguments. See Checchi (1995), Blair, et al (1995:38-52), Goodin (1996).

⁶⁹¹ This is not to discount that centrist political parties in Western Europe did not also provide support for political movements in El Salvador, such as West Germany's and the Christian Democrats (CDU) support of the Duarte government. In general, all types of European political favoritism began to fade soon after 1989. See Mujal-Leon, 1989. A political genealogy of NGOs is offered by Gonzalez (1991), Foley (1996) and MacDonald (1997). Some of the larger, international NGOs (CARE, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International, Catholic Relief Services) also accepted U.S. funding during the war. Most donors were reluctant to fund both NGOs and local government directly.

NGOs. While ARENA's post-war mobilization network represents a dispersion of access points to elites for civil society, direct citizen participation between elections is channeled into local processes that are heavily mediated by the upper institutional tiers.

This decentralization process began with Cristiani's first selection to implement his 1989 "Social Rescue Plan," through the reinvention of CONARA, the USAID funded rural counter-insurgency program, as a social fund.⁶⁹² CONARA's principal function would be to prevent social instability in reaction to the stabilization reforms. The National Reconstruction Secretariat (SRN), formed in 1992 to implement the PRN, incorporated CONARA and the Municipalities in Action Program and many of their core staff at the request of USAID but against the wishes of other donors.

The influence of USAID in the first several years of reconstruction can be appreciated in several ways. First, the U.S. was the most generous donor to the PRN, "front-loading" much of its \$250 million non-reimbursable contribution in the first year when other donors were slowly formulating their own pledges.⁶⁹³ The U.S. Embassy - AID mission complex, which following its own reconstruction was one of the largest in the world, housing more people than were employed in the entire SRN. Many on the USAID staff during PRN implementation had carried over from involvement in the counter-insurgency period. Among the Salvadoran staff in particular, a deep suspicion of NGOs associated with the FMLN and a palpable contempt for FMLN leaders reinforced a climate for reconstruction that was heavily pro-ARENA.⁶⁹⁴

Continuing the pattern set during the war, the SRN favored channeling reconstruction funds through municipal government with little involvement from the affected population in the design of these programs. By excluding many NGOs in the initial reconstruction programs based on strict application of legal criteria, particularly those organizations with close ties to the

⁶⁹² USAID provided an initial \$15 million and the entire SRP was funded at about \$115 million in 1989-1990. Sollis (1993: 446).

⁶⁹³ This timing and comparative volume of each donor to the PRN is outlined by Rosa and Foley (2000).

⁶⁹⁴ Based on interviews with USAID staff in 1990, 1995, and 1996. See also, Montgomery (1995: 230). Staff that displayed tolerance toward any proactive collaboration with opposition organizations were in the minority. Several USAID staff, both Salvadoran and expatriates, have assumed high ranking positions under various ARENA administrations, including the current Vice President, Vilma de Escobar.

FMLN, the SRN came under severe criticism and an effective boycott by European donors.⁶⁹⁵ A GAO study found that a combination of USAID inflexibility and unenthusiastic outreach to opposition NGOs resulted in their exclusion from early PRN funding. Having legal certification (*personería jurídica*) was one criterion, despite the fact that no FMLN NGO applications had been granted and one organization's application had been pending for nearly four years.⁶⁹⁶

Capacity building of opposition NGOs was needed, but few San Salvador based organizations had nearly the same experience with the PRN target population. PACT (Private Agencies Collaborating Together, a U.S. INGO) was awarded a \$2 million contract to train Salvadoran NGOs, yet had no experience in El Salvador.⁶⁹⁷ The UNDP complained that overhead charged by government friendly and international SRN contractors ran above 30%, while the prevailing average for UNDP projects was 10%.⁶⁹⁸ USAID has privately acknowledged the bias, but has only intervened reluctantly after U.S. Congress responded to reports detailing the more notorious resistance to community demands for broader decision making power.⁶⁹⁹

In its 1994 Annual Report, the SRN claims to have channeled more than a third of its contingent funding through NGOs, however most went to U.S. based NGOs or local NGOs with a track record of USAID contracts of ARENA loyalty and none involved direct funding of

⁶⁹⁵ Initially, NGOs could only submit proposals through a local planning process coordinated by the SRN and typically dominated by a mayor. Prior to 1994, very few mayors were receptive to opposition NGO or CSO project proposals (see Murray, 1994: 17-18). NGOs without legal certification (*personería jurídica*, which required government approval) or an adequate accounting system were considered grounds for exclusion by USAID. Despite some changes in the final PRN that reflected these concerns, mayors and the MEA process continued to limit the participation of opposition organizations.

⁶⁹⁶ GAO (1992: 15). USAID blamed institutional requirements for their insistence on minimal administrative and accounting systems. For their part, FMLN NGOs insisted that participation would have to be on their conditions, which included refusal to have mayors, largely ARENA or PCN, sign off on proposed projects or interference by USAID or SRN in the substantive nature of the proposal.

⁶⁹⁷ The program trained 45 NGOs the first year, but dropped to only 12 in the second.

⁶⁹⁸ Murray (1994). Foley and Hasbún (1996) found that average administrative costs among a sample of Salvadoran NGOs was 29%.

⁶⁹⁹ One author of the 1992 Yariv and Curtis study on MEA recalled that USAID officials threatened personal retaliation in an attempt to block the report upon its release.

grassroots organizations with the most experience in conflict zones.⁷⁰⁰ Another assessment of this money suggests that 0.62% of the NGO funding actually went directly to opposition NGOs.⁷⁰¹

In the early post-war period, community participation in local reconstruction decisions was limited to the *cabildo abierto*, or town meeting, as the primary inter-election mechanism for mayors to elicit citizen views on municipal resource allocation decisions. The *cabildo* was first established under colonial rule and was associated with the “golden age” of local democracy by some accounts of the early post-independence period in Central America. Nickson contests that the alleged virtues of the *cabildo* were embellished to mythologize aspects of municipal administration during and after Spanish rule that did not square with reality.⁷⁰² Efforts by USAID to revive this colonial institution in advocating post-war decentralization represents another chapter in this mythology.

Nickson’s account of the Latin America’s colonial legacy of local rule is instructive for understanding the present. The noble virtues of popular participation and autonomy inherited by the post-war *cabildos* tends to ignore the more significant rationales and functions of the institution’s first *cabildos*. Nickson notes that the *cabildos* were established in the first half decade of colonial rule to give legitimacy to economic aggrandizing by emerging local elites that was not specifically authorized and potentially inhibited by the colonial bureaucracy. “The *cabildos* immediately became the main institution for defending and representing the interests of the *conquistadores*, and the means by which they could be rewarded financially for the risks undertaken during the conquest...The *cabildo* was responsible for distributing the land that the *regidores* (appointed council members) as settlers, craved.” The *cabildo* also served to fix

⁷⁰⁰ SRN (1994) estimate of \$137.5 million total funding allocated, \$52 million was assigned to some 100 participating NGOs. Blair, et al (1995:38). This estimate includes 41 NGOs trained by PACT and 30 NGOs assisted by CRS. In 1992, Sollis (1993b: 16) reports that of the estimated \$10 million that the SRN channeled through NGOs, over half went to Creative Associates, \$1.8 million to Catholic Relief Services, \$1.3 million to FEPADE and FUSADES, and the rest through NGOs based in the U.S. or with ties to government.

⁷⁰¹ Murray et al (1995:17) provides an independent breakdown of \$40.5 million SRN project funding between Feb. 1992 and Nov. 1993, in which U.S. based INGOs received \$10.95 mn. (27%), Salesian NGOs (\$21.2 mn, 52.5%), UNDP (\$5.1 mn, 12.5%) and other NGOs (\$2.9 mn, 7.3%).

⁷⁰² Nickson (1990, chapter 1). He notes that the concept of municipal autonomy was recreated by Spain in its colonies at the same time such institutions were increasingly under threat by centralizing forces within Spain itself (7).

prices, enslave indigenous laborers, and elect the first magistrates, although these powers were gradually reigned in by a predatory Crown to avoid any revolt by the towns. Cabildo activities were confined to urban areas where the Spanish colonists resided, abdicating any responsibility to provide services to rural indigenous communities. In other words, rural inequality in Latin America began with the cabildo.

Regidores were appointed, local posts were sold or inherited, and administrative duties deteriorated to those most essential for delineating social status between elites and others. Moreover, the cabildo abierto was also a counter-insurgent institution from the outset. Nickson argues:

In the event of local emergencies, especially the need to organize defense against Indian attacks, or else for the celebration of royal occasions, the leading male citizens were invited to join the regidores in an open town meeting, known as the cabildo abierto. The democratic credentials of this institution have been greatly exaggerated by modern historians. Those who attended did so by invitation, not by right, and their opinions and suggestions were of an advisory nature and were not binding upon the cabildo. (1995: 10)

The choice by the modern colonial power to reintroduce the cabildo abierto system could not have been better suited to the current chapter in this long history of empowerment by invitation approach to decentralized rule in El Salvador. Cabildos were undemocratic, subservient, subject to strict surveillance and a fundamental mechanism for legitimating a redistribution of wealth among local elites – features that were less pronounced but still present when cabildos were restored in the late 1980s. Nevertheless, cabildos provided a selective foothold for the ascent of Creole local elites (peripheral elites in my vernacular) within the system of colonial rule. Independence movements used cabildo abiertos to elicit popular support in the years leading up to the fall of Spanish monarchy. Architects of modern decentralization reforms tend to overemphasize this brief democratic moment in cabildo history, despite the institution's failure to instill democratic values during the previous 300 years nor the capacity to stem the decline of the institution for the next century and a half (ISAM 1995: 14, Checchi and Checchi 1994; Blair, Booth, Córdova, and Seligson 1995: 31-38, and Seligson 1994).

USAID qualified CONARA/SRN success in strengthening local democracy by counting the number of cabildos held each year, which peaked at 448 for the 115 PRN municipalities in

1993, then declined steadily.⁷⁰³ Some mayors complained that were being forced to hold cabildos “without knowing what to say or having resources to meet citizens needs.”⁷⁰⁴ Projects were selected with little if any input from the community and were motivated by “make-work” goals rather than any interest in participatory development. Cabildos of this type were criticized for producing a one-way flow of information. “Citizens are able to voice their views on project needs, but they do not have adequate access to cost or budget information to truly participate in priority setting. It is rarely clear how public officials translate the voice of the community expressed in this manner into a list of projects to be financed” (Peterson, 1997:16). The initial experience of cabildos and the MEA program failed to live up their public billing as “the key mechanism by which civil society is being rebuilt (Blair, Booth, Córdova and Seligson, 1995:25).⁷⁰⁵

The U.N. helped negotiate the return of 44 of the 68 exiled mayors that had still been prevented from returning to their municipalities in FMLN controlled regions. Part of the deal that allowed mayors to return was an FMLN demand that changed the *cabildo abierto* process to permit that participation of a wider range of local actors in all aspects of local planning. The agreement established a date for the mayor’s return, after which a town meeting would be called to elect a reconstruction and development commission, determine priorities and inform the SRN of the community’s decisions. NGOs, *gremios* and grassroots community organizations (CSOs) actively joined local development and reconstruction commissions. However, the conditions placed by USAID on aid and ARENA influence in CONARA/SRN practices continued to focus on mayors as the key decision makers and project implementers. With few elected FMLN

⁷⁰³ The municipal code obligates councils to hold 4 cabildos per year, which for the 115 PRN municipalities would total 460. Goodin (1996:79) found no evidence of two other civic participation mechanisms called for by the PRN, (Social Monitoring Committees and Reconstruction Technical Committees) nor utilization of the Popular Consultation mechanism under the Municipal Code.

⁷⁰⁴ Morazán mayor, cited in USAID (1996: 47).

⁷⁰⁵ Despite the Municipal Code requirement that a municipal council must convene four cabildos per year in order to access MEA and FODES funds, a USAID survey found that most people (about two thirds of those surveyed) feel the cabildos do not provide enough opportunity to participate in local government, and that most attendees viewed cabildos as an opportunity to ask for projects rather than a space for discussing development priorities (Checchi and Carr, 1994:9). The principal evaluation of USAID support for PRN programs find that quality of participation rather than quantity of cabildos attended matters most for local development. Goodin (1996: 70).

mayors before 1997, many efforts to broaden local participation in municipal reconstruction committees were effectively blocked or met by intimidation and violence.⁷⁰⁶

Discomfort with USAID's effort to corner the local development market and CONARA/SRN's counter-insurgent track record and reputation for corruption, forced the multilateral banks to create their own alternative. The Social Investment Fund (FIS) was created with funding by the Inter-American Development Bank in June 1990. Modeled after the Bolivian experience, the FIS was designed to be a semi-autonomous agency with greater agility than the line ministries, staffed by professionals rather than political appointees and reporting directly to the executive. A four year term was fixed for the FIS as a temporary complement to structural adjustment, with a planned budget of \$180 million. Instead, the FIS would become a permanent state agency, sustained by \$128 million in IDB loans between 1990 and 1997.⁷⁰⁷

The FIS portfolio expanded upon the pre-approved menu of social infrastructure project that had been perfected by MEA, which in practice remained limited to schools, rural roads and bridges, clinics, latrines, community centers, sanitation, some reforestation and markets. This menu, while redressing the tremendous deficit in social infrastructure, did not coincide with either the magnitude nor the diversity of locally defined needs, particularly in the areas of productive infrastructure, capacity building and policy advocacy. Lacking a clear blueprint for how reconstruction would engage local actors, CONARA and FIS and their respective donors, competed to become the primary channel of compensatory funding within ARENA's reform.

A blueprint began to emerge in 1991, when the Cristiani administration charged the Ministry of Planning and Coordination of Social and Economic Development (MIPLAN) with the design of a Decentralization and Municipal Development Strategy as part of its global modernization strategy for the public sector. A preliminary decentralization plan was announced in 1993 and a group of senior policy makers, the *Comisión Técnico de Descentralización y*

⁷⁰⁶ Compare the well-known experiences in Suchitoto, Nejapa and Tecoluca before and after the 1994 elections in which FMLN mayors, backed by strong network of NGOs, entered and the local planning processes escaped ARENA control to become three of the most exemplary participatory budgeting experiences in the country. See Murray (1994), Yariv and Curtis (1992), SACDEL (1998). ARENA strongholds, such as in much of department of La Unión, saw little space opened for FMLN participation before or after the 1994 elections. Montgomery (1995: 231)

⁷⁰⁷ IDB loans Local Development Program (1067/OC-ES, ES-0109) and Local Development Program - Stage II (1352/OC-ES, ES-0120).

Desarrollo Municipal (CDM) was formed to formulate a five year decentralization plan, as well as a pilot project.⁷⁰⁸

As successor to Cristiani in 1994, President Calderón Sol re-stated his government's commitment to decentralization and produced a new plan with some important innovations (the formation of departmental municipal councils). Yet despite this new proposal and the marginal increase in the funds assigned to local government through the municipal transfer program, Fund for Social and Economic Development (FODES), the CDM process stalled.⁷⁰⁹ Decentralization qua privatization of public services advanced in education and energy, but was blocked in the areas of health and water.⁷¹⁰ Rodríguez (1999) notes that of 17 measures in Calderón Sol's 1994 *Plan de Gobierno*, fewer than half had substantially advanced toward full implementation by the end of his term in 1999. Where progress was made (increase in transfers to local government) external donor pressure and financing were instrumental. However, by the late 1990s, even ARENA's principal backers, USAID, complained about the lack of real progress in decentralization and questioned the government's political will.⁷¹¹

In addition to fiscal and legal constraints, both of which have been surmounted, low municipal capacity is the rationale given by ARENA preventing more rapid deconcentration of state responsibilities.⁷¹² Critics challenge that deconcentration is mediated by ARENA's capacity to shore up party discipline through distribution of the spoils. A decentralization expert representing the German cooperation agency, GTZ, and a member of the ad hoc council contends

⁷⁰⁸ The CDM was composed of MIPLAN, the National Reconstruction Secretariat (SRN), COMURES (the gremio of mayors), ISDEM (the government agency that provides technical support to municipal government), and the Treasury.

⁷⁰⁹ FODES was created under Duarte in 1988, setting a fixed (non-indexed) amount of \$2.86 million. Calderón Sol increased FODES to \$14.3 million in 1997.

⁷¹⁰ In the area of education, a World Bank loan financed the EDUCO program (1991-1995) which shifted some administrative responsibilities to community groups. See Burki, Perry and Dillinger (1999). In the area of health and water, the IDB financed the deconcentration of health and water services, with the privatization playing a major part. See Public Services International (2000), Córdova Macías and Orellana (2001).

⁷¹¹ Crosby, et al. (2000). Focus of USAID criticism was the unsustainability of local finance without tax reform and the lack of movement on key political reforms.

⁷¹² Half of El Salvador's 262 municipalities have fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, 65 have fewer than 5,000, which is inconsistent with the municipal code requiring a minimum of 5,000. Many mayors and council people have no more than a primary education. Some legal confusion exists in defining the functions of the municipality versus the central government. Córdova and Lara (1996).

that ARENA's resistance attributed resistance to decentralization to the veto capacity of political bosses that shadowed the Ministers of Education, Health and Public Works Ministries, as well as the Water and Sanitation agency (ANDA).⁷¹³ A facade of new consultative and deliberative structures on decentralization was created on paper, but very little actual progress was made.

Rather than responding or cultivating local demands, the government's focus was on upward accountability to donors, or the capture of new development resources by state level institutions (Crosby, et al. 2000: 11). Writing for USAID, Crosby observes, "most of the recent efforts in the area of local government decentralization have been organized from and directed by institutions or organizations at the center. If there has been any serious effort from below it has been largely, if not entirely, unapparent....the lack of bottom-up initiative for decentralization is striking."

ARENA's approach to decentralization has focused more on diversifying the state mechanisms for capturing public resources and ensuring that even modest policy advances shore up party control over lower level actors. Within this scheme, Salvadoran Institute for Municipal Development (ISDEM) and the Community Development Directorate (DIDECO) have been deployed to train mayors and form local development councils, respectively. Supported largely by USAID, ISDEM has existed to provide technical assistance to municipal governments, channel state transfers and extend lending to local governments. In theory, COMURES, the mayor's gremio would set policy demands, and if approved, ISDEM would implement the technical aspects of these policies. In practice, however, COMURES has done little under ARENA control (before 2000).⁷¹⁴ Moreover, ISDEM has failed to fulfill its technical function and instead, has performed more as the political arm of the governing party by assisting friendly mayors and harassing opposition ones. Currently, ISDEM provides technical assistance to only 48 municipalities (18%) (RDL 2003: 15). ISDEM's survival is tied to its function as the

⁷¹³ Interview, Dr. Oscar Mena, April 1999. Mena was the representative of GTZ-Promude, a program designed to support municipal strengthening and promote decentralization. Crosby, et al (1997: 57) illustrates similar perceptions in his decentralization stakeholder map. Subsequent corruption scandals involving officials in these institutions only reinforce this perception. Former ANDA President, Carlos Perla and various family members are currently being prosecuted for diversion of ANDA funds to finance private housing and other personal assets.

⁷¹⁴ COMURES was created in 1941, was inactive for much of the interim, and was revived again in 1992. The governing Board of Directors consists of 29 seats. For the 1997-2000 term, ARENA mayors held 11 seats, while FMLN mayors held 9.

mechanism for about two thirds of all state transfers to local governments, which explains its opposition to further administrative decentralization.⁷¹⁵

DIDECO is a community development agency within the former Ministry of Interior (now Gobernación) – long considered the franchise of the most conservative elements within ARENA. Created in the 1970s to promote and fund small, rural public works projects, DIDECO represented an early version of wartime civic action programs, which then served as the centerpiece of Molina administration’s program of “gobierno móvil.”⁷¹⁶ Since 1989, DIDECO promoters’ main task was to facilitate the formation and legalization of Community Development Associations (ADESCOs), of which some 2,000 were created.⁷¹⁷ At the same time, DIDECO promoters also served as departmental and local campaign organizers making no bones about associating any service delivered to expectations of support for ARENA candidates. The performance of ADESCOs as local catalysts for improved governance and development depends less on DIDECO than on whether ties to the local mayor or state officials pay off.⁷¹⁸

Three types of NGOs flourished in the post-war period, all driven in large part by the needs of the displaced populations and the flow of foreign funding. We might locate these NGOs at left, right and center positions on the political spectrum. In contrast to grassroots NGOs that evolved into increasingly formal organizations associated with the FMLN, a much

⁷¹⁵ USAID and GTZ has provided significant to support to modernize ISDEM, with questionable results. As the primary agency dealing with local financial administration, the scarcity of comparable local budget and expenditure information is only indicator of ISDEM capacity.

⁷¹⁶ Molina’s Gobierno Móvil involved a policy of traveling by military helicopter to each department regularly to inaugurate small public works projects financed by the Ministry of Interior. DIDECO (which before was FOCCO) was established to administer food for work programs with food aid donations from World Food Program, US PL-480 program and the European Community. By the late 1970s, DIDECO had five regional offices and functioned similar to a modern social safety net, with \$2.5 million budget for small communal development projects in areas of poverty and a \$1 million municipal loan portfolio. By 1983, the Interior Ministry budget for municipal projects had increased to approximately \$10 million. Not surprisingly, high priority “critical areas” were designated as Northern Chalatenango and Northern Morazán - two areas of intense recruitment by revolutionary forces. Memoria del Ministerio del Interior, Periodo 1977-1978 and 1982-1983. San Salvador.

⁷¹⁷ Ministerio del Interior (1994b). Between 1989-1994, DIDECO reports the legalization of 1,403 ADESCOs, 1,500 small infrastructure projects, and over 3,000 trainings of local leaders.

⁷¹⁸ Despite the earnest voluntarism of the community efforts, the anecdote provided in Blair et al (1995) of the noble efforts of a local ADESCO in Santa Ana to circumvent the corrupt ARENA mayor, this positive example ends up illustrating the very limitations of the DIDECO system. Strictly precluded to non-political challenges, even access to government officials will not likely compensate for the formidable power of political capture by local elites.

larger community of relief and development NGOs that profess political neutrality have emerged. The vast majority of these centrist NGOs are not pressure groups and refrain from any political advocacy, promoting self-help programs with private or government funding.

The growth of a third cluster of rightwing NGOs more oriented to the demands of the private sector were funded primarily by FUSADES and USAID.⁷¹⁹ Given the hierarchy approach to decentralization, the right was slow to acknowledge the significance of development NGOs. Distrust of citizen consultation and participation and a greater dependence on central government agencies to lead development interventions tends to concentrate any local decision making authority in the hands of the mayor and excludes most Salvadoran NGOs. USAID's disdain for a wide segment of opposition NGOs has contributed to this exclusion (Murray 1995; WOLA 1994; Blair, et al. 1995, and Crosby 1997). A 1994 USAID report attempted to distinguish between NGO and donor roles in politics and development,

NGOs will probably be a desirable and necessary resource for participatory project design and implementation,...one cautionary note, USAID should be sensitive in its dealings with NGOs with predominantly political agendas as opposed to development agendas, the inclusion of which in a USAID funded program could antagonize the host government and general populace and weaken the non-political image of the project. (USAID 1994: 31).

This struggle by USAID and ARENA to define the political boundaries of development as well as assign local institutions their respective roles in it clearly reflects the top-down nature of government led decentralization. Empowerment by invitation involves the tradeoff of politics in exchange for participation. Development work requires the abandonment of contentious, social movement tactics. Many NGOs had long accepted this tradeoff, particularly those U.S. INGOs that channeled U.S. relief as part of wartime civic action programs. Many others, with roots in the insurgency were willing to explore the bargain. In both cases, recognition by USAID as a legitimate political interest group was contingent upon eschewing disruptive politics, but had

⁷¹⁹ FUSADES itself was the creation of USAID in 1984 in response to the Christian Democrat resistance to the U.S. proposed stabilization reforms. As a beneficiary of over \$100 million in largely U.S. assistance between 1984-1992, FUSADES became the principal private sector NGO think tank and an incubator of business oriented NGOs. Rosa, 1993b) and Barry (1993).

material benefits. FUSAI is considered by many as the model for this type of centrist NGO, moving from a solidarity-driven organization to a benefits-driven one. By the 1997, the Salvadoran Foundation for Integral Support (FUSAI) had five regional offices and their infrastructure and micro-credit programs had amassed an annual budget of over \$6 million.⁷²⁰ Among some partners (and perhaps other NGOs that were not as competitive in resource mobilization), FUSAI was criticized for privileging the donors over the quality of services delivered, much less to solving the more structural challenges of rural poverty.

This not to say that all of the social forces associated with counter-insurgency had accepted this invitation. In January 1995, veterans of the Salvadoran Armed Forces (ADEFAES) and allied veterans of the other state security forces, blocked highways, organized public demonstrations and seized the Treasury Ministry, the Armed Forces Social Provision Institute, and the National Assembly for three days, taking 28 Congressional deputies as hostages to demand the benefits promised during the Peace Accords. By the 1998, 20,000 members of the former civil patrollers (APROAS) organized increasingly defiant and contentious demonstrations (highway blockages) to demand \$2,000 indemnification for themselves and war widows, and a similar re-integration package as that offered to the FMLN. Violent mobilization by forces on the right that were excluded from the post-war distribution of benefits forced significant concessions from Presidents Calderon Sol and Francisco Flores to maintain political stability.⁷²¹

One of the ironies of the early post-war period was that ex-soldiers, ex-police and civil patrollers applied some of the insurgent collective action tactics with greater frequency and, some argue, more effectiveness than the insurgents themselves. The FMLN did refrain from street demonstrations prior to the 1994 elections. One noted exception was in May 1993, when a group of former soldiers and former guerrillas staged a joint demonstration in front of the Presidential palace. In a clash with the anti-riot police, one ex-combatant with the FMLN was killed, six soldiers and guerillas were wounded and twelve more were captured. The demobilized security forces of the right had no network of NGOs or gremios to defend their

⁷²⁰ FUSAI 1997 Annual Report. See <http://www.fusai.org.sv>, Accessed Nov. 2005. According to the website, FUSAI boasts an annual program budget of \$1.5 million between 1992 and 2002.

⁷²¹ The government rushed benefits to some members of ADEFAES, and added others to the rolls. In 2001, President Flores allegedly used earthquake reconstruction funding to issue small grants to a lower number of ex-civil patrollers in 2001.

interests under the Peace Accords and so were dependent on the government. The intensity of protests by ex-soldiers and civil patrollers may reflect this lack of effective advocacy by allied civil society organizations.

The decidedly political FORTAS network of local business development foundations were reluctantly launched by FUSADES as an alternative mechanism to capture reconstruction funds.⁷²² FORTAS was designed to appeal to the philanthropic interests of the local private sector and the family names of the country's wealthiest landed gentry (Dalton, Alfaro, Kriete, Novoa, Homberger, Duke, Avila) could be found on the FORTAS board of directors.⁷²³ The almost exclusive menu of social infrastructure projects (80%-90% schools), built with government, USAID or IDB funding complemented by a small member counterpart, reinvented the paternalist charity model of elite run NGOs that prevailed in El Salvador before the war. More accurately, the mission of the foundations as to diminish concerns about inequality in poor rural towns, as program director Cesar Mendez stated, "to make it that working people are content that the private sector is doing something for the community."⁷²⁴ However, true to the ARENA model for NGOs, the largely disconnected FORTAS NGOs have steered clear of policy solutions to local problems, as in say, decentralization, preferring to enable local organizations to deliver improved services (Crosby 1997: 53).

In addition to social stability, the business sector was sold the FORTAS model as a possible tax haven. Blair (1995) reports that an unsuccessful ARENA 1995 tax reform proposal would have allowed coffee producers to divert taxes to locally controlled FORTAS foundations instead of the state. Elite interest in FORTAS is also rooted in the capture of public funds that act as cross subsidies for private needs, increasingly dealing with the costs of redressing environmental deterioration. To take one example, the NGO Friends of Ilopango Lake Foundation is controlled by the largest property and industry owners surrounding the lake, which

⁷²² See Murray (1994) and Foley (1996) for a discussion of the FUSADES spin-off NGOs. Foley argues that FORTAS was a low priority within the FUSADES NGO family, emerging only after USAID pressure to cut funding. Several foundation representatives also complained about the lack of FUSADES support. An interview with FORTAS director Max Mendez in February, 1998 revealed uncertainty about the future budget support, which had fallen from \$450,000 in 1996 to about \$120,000. While Mendez claimed that this subsidy leveraged as much in \$1.7 million in total project funding – this amounts to the annual budget of \$40,000 for each single Foundation.

⁷²³ FEDES Board of Directors, 1995-1997, published in *Diario de Hoy*, Dec. 17, 1995.

⁷²⁴ Interview, Cesar Mendez, Feb. 1998.

include ex-FISDL director Norma de Dowe, Sherwin Williams franchise owner, Ernesto Freund, and other local industrialists.⁷²⁵ These landowners and local business owners are now under scrutiny after years of unsustainable land use and contaminated water discharge by the adjacent industrial park has led to high levels of heavy metals and fertilizer residue in the water, dramatic loss of topsoil, diminished tourist potential and vulnerability to landslides. Rather than invest their own resources to redress the environmental damage caused in large part by the owners themselves, the Friends of the Lake Foundation was established in 1993 to capture public funds. In its 1996 Annual report, FORTAS reports that it helped channel USAID funds to subsidize the reforestation of hillsides around Lake Ilopango.⁷²⁶ Similar linkages between “conservation” NGOs with ties to agrarian and industrial elite and FORTAS foundations exist throughout the country.⁷²⁷

Interviews with six FORTAS foundations revealed that all maintained offices in San Salvador and no more than half still operated in any substantive way.⁷²⁸ The FORTAS network (*Federación de Fundaciones de Empresariales de Desarrollo Social*, FEDES) has not coordinated on larger resource mobilization or pursued broader political advocacy initiatives. The low expectations held for the FORTAS initiative explains the complacency with the results. “Civil society, FORTAS-style, reproduces and reinforces the top-down structure of political and economic power in the communities where the foundations are located, including the very individuals who have always wielded that power.” (Foley 1996: 79).

Lacking confidence in any of the government local development assistance agencies, the IDB and GTZ funding for FIS effectively created a competing source of technical assistance for mayors. As conditions for implementation of FIS social infrastructure projects, municipalities were obliged to pay for FIS project supervision. These supervisory functions were considered paternalistic and often as corrupt as with ISDEM. In October 1996, the FIS was converted into

⁷²⁵ *Proceso*, July 1, 1998, Vol. 19, pg. 813, “Smokescreen over Lake Ilopango,”

⁷²⁶ FUSADES Annual Report (1996: 29-31). The recent landslides caused by heavy rains and earthquakes in El Salvador raise questions about the technical adequacy of these minimal investments.

⁷²⁷ FundaCoatepeque, a similar Foundation in the coffee heartland of Santa Ana, was awarded by the Inter-American Foundation as one of the best public-private partnerships in 1998.

⁷²⁸ Visits to FundaGuadalupe, San Vicente, Jiquilisco, Funde Nonualco, Berlin, Jucuapa in 1999.

FISDL (adding Local Development), and effectively absorbed the MEA and the SRN, becoming a permanent government agency. At that time, a scandal came to light that resulted in the firing of SRN and FIS President, Norma de Dowe, and three other directors, on charges of misusing \$2 million in public funds. De Dowe was accused by the Court of Accounts of arbitrarily increasing the salaries of 250 FIS employees, including some executives, before their contracts expired in December 1995, which entitled them to inflated indemnity payments (by as much as \$90,000). De Dowe then hired as many as 100 of these same employees to new contracts in January 1996 at the higher rates. Her resignation was a blow to the credibility of the FIS and derailed de Dowe's fast track ascent within ARENA.

Two years hence, de Dowe and her colleagues were absolved by the state Attorney General, arguing that a "mechanical error" was responsible for the series of administrative missteps.⁷²⁹ By then, she was relegated to the NGO sector. Behind the scenes, it was revealed that the original charges and their derogation were elements of political divisions within ruling coalition of ARENA and the PCN. The President of the Court of Accounts that brought the investigation to light was Francisco Merino, former ARENA Vice-President with Cristiani that had defected to the PCN in 1994.⁷³⁰ Traditionally the Court of Accounts is the political patrimony of the PCN under ARENA rule. The charges were introduced in 1996, thrown out in 1998, reintroduced in 1999 and 2002, as a reflection of the ebb and flow of political jockeying for control over public resources between ARENA and the PCN.⁷³¹

The reconstruction emergency caused by Hurricane Mitch and a fresh infusion of funds by the IDB rescued efforts to convert FISDL into the lead local development agency. The third IDB loan to FISDL in 1998 was intended to improve accountability by deconcentrating staff to

⁷²⁹ *La Prensa Gráfica*, Sep. 2, 1998, pg. 5; *Proceso*, Oct 30, 1996, Vol. 17, pg. 732.

⁷³⁰ Merino is also known for exercising immunity granted to legislators to avoid prosecution after shooting a police officer in a dispute after being stopped for drunk driving as well as the illegal sale of environmentally restricted property in 1996. Merino's family also ran two reconstruction NGOs that won large contracts from USAID early in the reconstruction, but have since stopped operating.

⁷³¹ *Diario de Hoy*, Oct. 28, 1999; *Vertice*, July 7, 2002; The list of corruption scandals involving ARENA and PCN officials in the post-war period is too long to mention. While businesses owned by ex-President Cristiani are implicated in at least a half dozen cases involving claims in the millions of dollars, he has so far remained untouchable. With the harvest of low hanging fruit in El Salvador, the tepid and unsystematic treatment of corruption by the principal media can only be construed as collusion. Compare the treatment of ex-Presidents and other high ranking officials in Costa Rica.

regional offices and move the agency toward an advisory function with respect to participatory budgeting and away from project finance.⁷³² At this point, there was more confusion than ever among mayors about reconciling the demands of competing local development institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. ISDEM and FISDL were viewed as performing the same function, but responding to different principal donors.

The shock of the 1997 elections forced the Presidency of Francisco Flores to revise the party's strategy with local officials. In 1999, as part of the *New Alliances* strategy of the Flores government (1999-2004), ARENA designated FISDL as the "*ente rector*" (normative agency) of local development and instituted greater emphasis on participatory local planning to prioritize local investment. FISDL was charged with implementing the National Strategy for Local Development, which placed an increasing premium on local matching funds (including remittances), participatory planning, and competition. At the same time, NGOs comprising the Local Development Network criticized FISDL's reticence in engaging the central debates around decentralization, including absence from legislative initiatives to reform the municipal code, create a locally administered land tax, and create laws to regulate transparency and citizen participation in budget processes and for municipal public employees (RDL 2003: 182). In sum, the rhetorical commitments to decentralization in the New Alliances program, like that of the two ARENA administrations before it, were unmatched by practice.

The opportunity to move beyond ARENA's top-down, accommodative approach to decentralization was also enhanced in 1999 with the results of yearlong national consultation (*Plan de Nación*) conducted by the non-partisan National Development Commission.⁷³³ The results of the consultation revealed a strong popular endorsement for greater, faster decentralization to local authorities. Rather than use this political capital provided by the consultation to surmount the political resistance to decentralization within the line ministries, Flores instead shelved it and proceeded with his far less ambitious original plan.

In sum, political competition within the ARENA controlled ruling coalition has given rise to multiple agencies charged with local development responsibilities. What all of the local

⁷³² Interview, Roberto Huezo, FISDL Director, March 18, 1999

⁷³³ *Plan de Nación* was a six person commission authorized by President Calderon Sol in 1997 to consult nationally in a yearlong series of small meetings to identify and prioritize problems, solutions and develop a shared vision of national development. CND (1998)

development agencies associated with the central government agreed upon was an aversion to subjecting the adjustment reforms to any litmus test of public consensus.⁷³⁴ Most of the critical decisions, from the creation of these institutions to their budget allocations, were taken at the top with almost no participation by the affected population. The modus operandi of these agencies also reflected ARENA's distrust and unwillingness to deal with most NGOs and more directly through community organizations. NGOs created by the business sector or ones that prioritized the reduction/avoidance of conflict with the government were tapped as allies in this top-down local economic development model. However, like the various government agencies charged with attending local needs, there was a tendency to pursue individual strategies with local target populations rather than coordinate more broadly. Competition for development resources rather than building coalitions either at the NGO level or as a means for strengthening local populations, became the norm in the context of strong preferences for market principles.

This convergence of interests between donors and the ascendant ARENA government resulted in a project implementation strategy that placed little premium on consultation, participation or accountability to the vast majority of local actors. As Sollis observed early on:

the important Bolivian ESF [Economic Social Fund] lesson about participation does not fit the El Salvador government's managerial view of poverty and what to do about it. As objects of relief, the poor are told what they can expect. At best they will participate as implementers of projects, but more likely municipal governments will reinforce a tradition of vertical decision-making and authoritarian politics which has never been at ease with independent community activity. (Sollis 1993: 452).

Government decentralization strategy centered around the FISDL. Since its inception in 1990, FISDL has channeled \$542 million to local governments. On average, FISDL projects represented less than 10% of public sector capital investment, so can only take proportional credit for any improvement in the provision of local services or improvements in local decision making.⁷³⁵ Half of FISDL funding went to build schools and improve tertiary roads. Another 25% went to water, sanitation and electrification. Less the 3% was invested in technical

⁷³⁴ Multilateral lending eclipsed all other sources of external finance to El Salvador in 1993, with the exception of remittances which now constitute the equivalent of annual tax revenues at \$1.34 billion.

⁷³⁵ MEA had transferred an estimated \$130 million between 1986-1994, or about \$10 million per year. Prior to 1994, transfers through the MEA program represented 50% of local government revenue for smaller municipalities.

assistance (which included participatory planning after 1999). Even fifteen years after its creation, no funding has gone to direct productive infrastructure.⁷³⁶ Short of the glowing evaluations it assigns itself, the evidence reinforces cross-national studies that have challenged the effect these programs have had on improving access or quality of basic services.

FISDL was fashioned as an honest broker between NGOs, local government and the poorest communities. With the exception of the 1995 scandal, FISDL has generally received high marks for efficient and relatively pro-poor allocation of resources.⁷³⁷ Yet it has fallen short in many of the other performance goals tied to past IDB loans.⁷³⁸ Beneficiary participation was negligible before 1998, leading to persistent maintenance problems and raising questions about local ownership.. Claims regarding FISDL's contribution since then to a local culture of participation and accountability" are not typically backed up with evidence. The meaning of "participatory budgeting" is left intentionally vague. Opposition mayors have also complained the ARENA misses no opportunity to politicize FISDL projects, attributing undo responsibility to the ruling party and exaggerating impact even though the projects are no where near the level of investment demanded by local governments.

Although state transfers have increased, FISDL has contributed little to overcoming ARENA's opposition to property tax, or comparable measures to strengthen local fiscal sustainability. In terms of creating a suitable legal and regulatory framework for decentralization or local development, an official with the IDB, which has invested \$250 million in modernizing the FISDL concluded that, "El Salvador still lacks an '*ente rector*' for local development, despite over ten years of trying to make FISDL that agency." ⁷³⁹

⁷³⁶ The figures are taken from a FISDL "Achievements" fact sheet for the period 1990-2005, <http://www.fisd.org.sv>, accessed in November 2005. Although the IDB has favored greater investment in rural economic infrastructure, remittances are preferable to FISDL funding to avoid the provision of private goods with public finance.

⁷³⁷ IDB (2005, Annex). Data on project execution efficiency reflects well on FISDL, but little empirical evidence on local empowerment is available. One IDB official argued that the Bank considered it a success that the FISDL was not politicized during the 1999 election. Yet, a municipal official from Tecoluca complained the FISDL was holding up nine projects in March, 1999, weeks before the election because too many FISDL employees were working in the campaign. He also charged that FISDL regularly pads projects budgets and diverts this surplus to favored contractors that overbid and reportedly kickback some profits to FISDL employees.

⁷³⁸ Reference to IDB Project Completion Report for ES109/Loan 1067/OC-ES, cited in IDB (2005).

⁷³⁹ Interview, Priscilla Phelps, IDB Local Development Specialist, June 28, 2005 Washington, DC

Despite new packaging, the FISDL continues to be viewed by many as a top-down effort by the ruling party to retain control over local development as FMLN victories at the municipal level have made political capture more difficult. Any political autonomy enjoyed by the FISDL has depended on external financing, which could end in the coming years. In direct competition with COMURES and ISDEM, FISDL has steadily traded off stronger alliances with community organizations and NGOs, for closer ties to government in the interest of preserving its own budget.⁷⁴⁰ As a consequence, FISDL funded municipal projects (largely the choice of a fixed menu of social infrastructure) have increasingly become disconnected from broader questions of economic development, particularly in rural areas.

Nevertheless, the deficit of social infrastructure is so profound that social investment will remain one element of local economic development strategies in the foreseeable future. As the flagship local development agency, FISDL has tended to forego or be politically restricted from entering larger coalitions to achieve the higher levels of resource mobilization or political advocacy.⁷⁴¹ To its credit, FISDL has explored the prospect of financial partnerships with hometown associations of Salvadorans living in the U.S. as investors in local infrastructure projects. FISDL's new program, *Unidos por la Solidaridad*, channels remittances as co-financing matching funds into local investment through FISDL projects. In 2003, FISDL reported that of the 509 projects executed for a total global investment of \$102 million, 45 projects included investments of remittances by hometown associations totaling \$11.2 million.⁷⁴²

Strengthening this transnational dimension to local development has tremendous promise, and remittances are the top investment target in El Salvador far outpacing traditional levels of foreign direct investment. Exercising the advantage of access to greater public resources, ARENA established stronger ties than the FMLN to the Salvadoran hometown association leaders. This advantage has given ARENA the edge in terms of transnational links to its mobilization network. While a test of a remittance receiving municipality lies outside the scope

⁷⁴⁰ A more recent reorganization of FISDL in 1999 was intended to decentralize the agencies work by relocating staff to regional offices. There is little information available that these measures have changed the institution's prior centralist approach.

⁷⁴¹ Observed participation of FISDL in several institutional networks reveals a technical value added that is offset by its own sense of superiority. As a government agency, advocacy participation is institutionally challenging, even if there existed the political will.

⁷⁴² *Diario de Hoy*, Jan. 22, 2004; See also <http://www.fisdl.gob.sv>.

of this study, my hypothesis holds that no form of decentralized funding flows can escape the empowering or disempowering effects of inequality and political capture unless local capacity for collective action can to ensure the effective use of these funds.

C. EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CONFLICT

The FMLN has sustained a more contentious strategy of decentralized development in regions where traditional local inequality was uprooted as a consequence of insurgent political and economic control during the war. FMLN regional hegemony nurtured a fundamentally different conception of citizenship to that prevailing in government controlled zones and that embodied in pre-war Salvadoran political culture and institutions.

Political-military support for the FMLN endured for over a decade in control zones because certain decision-making was carefully decentralized. The definition of local needs and the decisions over how to allocate resources in zones of FMLN control permitted an unprecedented exposure to principles of equity, accountability and participation. While mobilization was from the top-down, often steered by commanders, many of which who came from the urban middle class, a reciprocal relation with peasants and workers broke with the clientelist and repressive cycle of past relations.⁷⁴³ Violent disruption of elite power in much of the Salvadoran countryside by the insurgent FMLN was a shock to the structure of political opportunity that reduced the asymmetric power and unaccountability of the rich, shifted the balance of distributional conflict toward the interests of the poor and induced the grudging adoption of redistributive policies (Wood 2000; Binford 1998).

The process of accompanying the displaced and combatant population facilitated a break with the past paternalist institutionalization of Salvadoran civil society. The administration of these programs involved experiences of self-governance among groups of the displaced population as well as within the NGOs themselves. New organizing skills were learned, contacts with the international donor community were established, services were provided independent of

⁷⁴³ With some notorious exceptions noted by Gibb (2000).

state support, and a vibrant spirit of solidarity all constituted a source of social capital that emerged out of the conflict.

In the post-war period, FMLN local development experiences have continued to emphasize bottom-up, and at times, conflictive challenges to the political and economic elite. In practice, this approach to decentralization has involved simultaneous and non-preferential investments in both elite and local institutional capacity. Lacking any control over state agencies, the NGOs, municipal governments and community organizations associated with the FMLN have acted with considerable autonomy if not incentives from the party to design and implement local reconstruction plans, pursue funding and channel local demands upward.

At the elite level, the FMLN legislative deputies have pushed measures in the Assembly, and to some extent in COMURES, that advance a progressive local development agenda. The 52 member National Council and the 19 member FMLN political commission, legislative deputies and mayors are more vertically (downward) accountable to democratic mechanisms and this dependence on local credibility is reflected in collaboration between national actors and mayors, NGOs and gremios to convey legitimacy and introduce political pressure needed to win approval of difficult reforms (FODES increase, reduction of the agrarian debt).⁷⁴⁴ Although the FMLN has also tended to revert to hierarchical decision making within its political commission and commitments to democratic mechanisms have wavered, particularly in periods of internal division, the notably more horizontal relations between national and local actors accentuates a fundamentally different notion of decentralization.

Despite the authoritarian command structure that prevailed during the war, the categorical framing of the FMLN and their supporters as enemies of democracy stands in stark contrast to pragmatic, often innovative participatory experiments in national and local governance that have emerged in many FMLN communities. The FMLN has instituted local and national primary elections for municipal, legislative and national candidates, which allows a unprecedented voice for local party members in El Salvador's political system. Open council meetings in FMLN municipal governments, such as San Salvador since 1997, represent the exceptions to the rule in the country's closed door governance culture. The FMLN has also been the principal force

⁷⁴⁴ The FMLN National Council consisted in 1994 of 66 members: ten representatives from each of the FMLN's five constituent organizations, one representative from each of the country's 14 departments; the head of the FMLN's block of deputies in the legislature; and a coordinator of FMLN mayors. Since the consolidation of the party in 1994, the size of the National Council and Political Commission has varied.

behind other electoral reforms, such as home vote, extension of voting privileges to migrants in the U.S., gender quotas for political candidates, term limits (self-imposed), as well as the tax and transfer mechanisms most suitable for improved financial sustainability.⁷⁴⁵

On other political reforms (single member electoral districts, proportional representation on municipal councils, campaign finance, on the formation and termination of political parties), FMLN leadership has been more calculated. There has been a decline in women's participation since the 1995 peak that neither party has been able to correct. ARENA is not known for the promotion of women's participation or legislation aimed at improving social and economic conditions facing women.⁷⁴⁶ Just fifty years after winning the right to vote in 1953, women's participation in government remains limited. Women currently hold only 2 of every 10 government posts, or 20% (UNDP 2003). Only 10% of congressional deputies, 12% of cabinet ministers, 6.5% of mayors and 13% of Supreme Court justices are women. In congressional leadership positions, women's representation has actually declined in recent years, from 33% in the period from 1988 – 1991 to 18% from 2003 – 2005. Rising violence against women has only underscored the limited advances toward gender equity in the post-war period (Paterson 2006).

However, FMLN has not fared much better in the representation of women. The FMLN adopted internal statutes that insure at least one third of all its candidates for public office are women and 50% of all party leadership position nominees are women. In 1994, the FMLN elected the largest number of women to the Assembly, despite holding only 21 seats. Subsequent elections have failed to fulfill these mandates, which the party attributes to the lack of voluntarism among potential women candidates. In the 2000 municipal elections 22 women had won office. In the 2003 legislative and municipal elections, only nine women were elected to the legislative assembly. Seven were from the FMLN and two from ARENA. In municipal elections 17 women were chosen out of 262 municipalities. Ten women mayors are from ARENA, five from the FMLN, two from the National Conciliation Party (PCN) and one from

⁷⁴⁵ Absentee voting for Salvadorans living in exile was first proposed by the FMLN in the 1989 electoral proposal to postpone the March 1990 elections. Term limits for Congressional deputies was adopted in 2000.

⁷⁴⁶ The Alfredo Cristiani government (1989-1994) opened three clinics for women victims of abuse, and the Armando Calderón Sol government (1994-1999) created the Salvadoran Institute for Women's Development (ISDEMU) following the Beijing World Women's Conference in 1995, but neither government created legislation that responded to social discrimination, political exclusion or the causes of domestic violence. According to Las Dignas, the government altered the findings of the first ISDEMU report in 1997, raising government compliance with gender-related goals from 10% to 60%.

the coalition FMLN-CDU (United Democratic Center). The fact that in 2003 nine of the 17 recently elected women mayors were re-elected is a clear sign that many of the women who take office are capable of maintaining voter confidence.⁷⁴⁷

According to a CID-Gallup poll conducted in 2003, 37% of the women surveyed say that they do not participate in politics because their husband will not allow them to; 32% because they felt that the population would not vote for a woman; and 10%, because they felt they were not prepared for governing.⁷⁴⁸

Based largely on FMLN criticism, early post-war evaluations of the municipal town meeting approach to administering local reconstruction funding showed that local governance was not seen as very participatory, and tended toward ritualistic validation of local authority (Goodin, et al. 1996). Some mayors and NGOs, including many within the FMLN party, have transformed the *cabildo abierto* into a participatory budgeting mechanism that has deepened citizen involvement in the allocation of local resources. Municipal planning processes have also emphasized building horizontal ties with other mayors and NGOs as well as vertical linkages with the state and international donors and grassroots community organizations in the coordination of local development efforts.

NGOs have figured more prominently within the empowerment through conflict approach to decentralization (although the effects are mixed). While USAID excluded FMLN NGOs on technical grounds, these same organizations were considered trustworthy enough by European donors to channel an estimated \$25 million in ex-conflictive zones between 1992-1994 (Murray 1995: 109). The creation of many FMLN NGOs, *gremios* and community organizations have involved decisions taken by the insurgent high command, but the autonomy and accountability of these organizations in the post-war period has shifted. Some of the principal development NGOs allied with the FMLN now enjoy direct and independent donor relations and the space for maneuver rests less on party relations and more on credibility at the community level. In turn, access points to elite decision makers tend to be more dispersed in FMLN mobilization networks.

⁷⁴⁷ Despite factional divisions, the FMLN elected Dra. Violeta Menjívar as the first woman mayor of San Salvador in the March 2005 elections.

⁷⁴⁸ *Inforpress Central America Report*, Nov. 28, 2003

One concrete aspect of FMLN rule in local government or through the presence of NGOs has been the mobilization of the poor to demand greater redistribution of land and productive resources. The empowerment through conflict strategy includes ample focus on class conflict between rich and poor and on both absolute and relative gains for the poor as necessary conditions for empowerment.⁷⁴⁹ Examples include campaigns to fulfill the commitments of the Peace Accords, cancellation of the agrarian debt, challenges to the privatization of water and health care and as well as dozens of localized protests for and against infrastructure projects. Contentious collective actions have forced expropriative redistribution of assets, which have lowered inequality and reduced the asymmetric bargaining power of local elites. It is not surprising that FMLN rural municipalities defy national indicators of income and land inequality that persist at levels as high or higher than ever.

Scholars of revolution have attributed a variety of pathologies to insurgent rule and the FMLN strategies to the collective action problem have no doubt generated certain disempowering effects (Skocpol 1979; Lichbach 1995: 261-275; Grossman 1991, 1999; Collier 1998). Some critics of the FMLN argue that the politics of disruption have created as many new obstacles to collective action as they removed. Stimulating civil strife can lower economic growth, foster intolerance and criminal activity, and weaken the legitimacy of political institutions – all of which tend to negatively impact the poor. The post-war effects of insurgent strategies are evident in the inequality of privilege between leadership and base, poor administration of reconstruction funding, the routinization of protest, and participation in criminal violence.

Perhaps the more complex contribution of FMLN strategies of empowerment through conflict derive from the difficulties of reconciling a highly centralized organizational structure with the incentives for decentralized decision-making autonomy. During the war, these “pathologies” of insurgent collective action contributed to destructive competition between the five principal insurgent groups, an alleged culture of “*asistencialismo*” that undermined local self-reliance, and the failure to monitor abuses of leaders at the local level.⁷⁵⁰ The possibility of

⁷⁴⁹ The relative-absolute gains distinction is particularly important for evaluating the impact of empowerment strategies in light of the accumulated evidence that development interventions frequently empower the already powerful rich and middle classes prior to or instead of empowering the poor.

⁷⁵⁰ *Asistencialismo* is a term created by the donor community to describe the alleged habit of foreign aid dependence among communities whose livelihoods are destroyed by conflict or natural disasters.

winning the war unified disparate social forces until the 1992 ceasefire, but has unraveled under post-war political competition. Internecine power struggles among party elites are largely to blame for the FMLN's failure to win the Presidency since 1994 and the fumbled implementation of municipal and national primaries have been at times more damaging to the legitimacy of the party than otherwise. The fragmentation of the former coalition of five insurgent organizations into competing ideological or personalist factions has dramatically deflated the mystique with which most ex-combatants have viewed the party leadership.

The challenges of democratic transition as well as the differences between ARENA and the FMLN were no more visible than the FMLN's 1998 effort to elect a slate of candidates for following year's Presidential election. In 1996, the FMLN approved internal primaries to elect candidates at the national level. Since 2000, the FMLN has been the only party to elect its leaders through a universal and secret vote of some 1,000 party delegates. ARENA, by contrast treats party delegates as the rubber stamp of closed door decisions taken by COENA.⁷⁵¹ In practice, FMLN efforts to devolve decision making power to the base have been unpredictable and disorderly, perhaps the antithesis of ARENA's emphasis with top-down control.

During the first half of 1998, FMLN held municipal committee meetings to sound out support for potential Presidential candidates. National delegates arrived at the 6th National Party Convention on Aug. 15, 1998 after four months of informal lobbying between that had narrowed the pre-candidates to a fiercely competitive race between a "*renovadores*" formula behind San Salvador Mayor, Hector Silva and the "*ortodoxos*" formula of Human Right Ombudsman, Victoria Marina de Aviles and Economist, Santiago Arias.

The FMLN Convention would be the first in the nation's history to elect a Presidential candidate, and a woman candidate, by secret ballot. The media speculated on the significance of the event with members of the invited revolutionary and political dignitaries from Latin America, Europe, and Vietnam as well as a large contingent from the UCS, a centrist party contemplating an alliance with the FMLN Presidential ticket. Gregarious lobbying by a minority of militant supporters of both candidates contrasted with the quiet but optimistic participation of the vast majority of delegates that ranged from ex-combatants to former to NGO staff to organizers for

⁷⁵¹ COENA chosen candidates at all levels are ratified by show of hands in a general assembly. In 2004, ARENA attempted its first primary where Tony Saca won a questionable internal vote over Carlos Quintanilla Schmidt by a vote of 900 to 5.

Duarte's PDC.⁷⁵² An invited representative of the UCS that also headed one of the FORTAS Foundations, commented on the historic significance of the convention:

outsiders see this convention as an important achievement in civic education, not simply for the FMLN as a party but for the country. This example of contesting for political representation in an election in which the results are genuinely uncertain is unprecedented. Before the political space was opened in 1997, this type of event would have been impossible.⁷⁵³

At 6:30 pm, after hours waiting to register and listening to nomination speeches, 921 of the official 1,034 delegates finished casting their ballot for one of the two proposed formulas. The result was announced at 8:00 pm, 441 votes for Aviles, 431 for Silva, 49 abstentions. The orthodox delegates erupted in celebration, only to be stunned in hearing what came next. As representatives of the party leadership and candidates huddled to interpret the results, it was announced that the party statutes required a winning vote to equal to 50% of the 1,034 delegates plus one (518) – which neither candidate had achieved.

Few of the delegates were apparently aware of this rule, although one elections supervisor assured me that the Convention was prepared with the ballots and boxes for a second and even a third vote. Both sides expected a clear victory. The convention committee had not provided for a tie vote, and as night fell many delegates slipped out to make the long bus trip back to their rural homes. By the time it was established that a new vote would be called, there were too few delegates for a call a quorum. Puzzled but patient, the remaining delegates waited for nearly four hours as the candidates and party commissioners negotiated an official interpretation.

By midnight, patience was exhausted. The ranks of the delegates had visibly thinned. The candidates announced in succession that a consensus decision had been reached with the Political Commission that the vote did not meet party statutes and a second simple majority vote would be necessary. When Silva announced that the next vote would be held in two weeks, the Aviles supporters began to demand his resignation. Despite the assurances from Aviles, and other party leaders that they endorsed the decision, the delegates from both sides disrupted the

⁷⁵² Polls showed the FMLN and ARENA tied at 30% approval going into the convention.

⁷⁵³ Interview, Eddy Henríquez, Fundación Guadalupe.

speeches, shouting them down. As order disintegrated, the remaining party militants rushed the stage demanding an alternative arrangement that favored their candidate. Even among the delegation of invited revolutionaries that sat in observant approval for most of the day, decorum had fractured into finger pointing as FMLN ex-commanders tried to mediate between their septuagenarian colleagues.

The party leaders backpedaled, at one point floating a trial balloon of a snap vote of the delegates present to validate the proposal for a second vote. This final improvisation simply confused matters, with too few delegates left or clarity on the measure to ensure that any vote would be valid. As the entire process was about to slip out of control, Facundo Guardado (head of the Political Commission and the *renovador* faction) declared that the convention had ended and turned off the microphones. Delegates departed for waiting buses disgruntled and unclear about what had happened.

The debacle was captured in its entirety by several radio stations and the negative publicity was costly. Two weeks later, a second convention was held where only one of the two prior formulas was voted on. Uneasy with the controversy, Silva had withdrawn. Aviles also fell far short of the votes needed to launch her candidacy (more than 50% of the delegates present). The convention decided to have departmental bodies consult on a new formula. Facundo Guardado and Maria Marta Valladares, two ex-commanders of the FPL, were nominated as the revisionist formula. In the third convention on Sept 27, 1998 voting rules were changed to permit a simple majority victory and to vote for formulas rather than separate votes for Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. Guardado and Valladares won by a 33 vote margin (463-430).

Some praised the experience as an inevitable lesson in democratization, others disparaged the FMLN, and confidence in the party's capacity to govern fell among many undecided voters.⁷⁵⁴ Guardado eventually lost by 23 points and the revisionist wing was blamed for loss.

This competition that spilled into the public domain in 1998 was not new nor was it confined to the political arena. Factional competition contributed in the early 1990s to the

⁷⁵⁴ The UCA radio station, YSUCA provided complete coverage of the convention. Writers for the UCA Jesuit weekly magazine, *Proceso*, which has historically disagreed with the FMLN on many aspects of the party's political strategy, have been the most openly critical of the perceived governing inexperience. The divide between many leftist intellectuals and FMLN politicians has grown to such an extent that both sides are more capable of establishing working alliances with their respective peers on the right than with each other.

existence of five separate and competing post-war mobilization networks associated with each of the five FMLN organizations, with mirror image templates of NGOs, gremios and local development initiatives, sometimes within the same local space. Some attribute these internal divisions to the centralism of party leadership, others to the natural pluralist tendency with which any democratizing society must cope. Nevertheless, the benefits of post-war decentralization reforms within the party have not clearly outweighed the costs so far for the FMLN, as greater voice for delegates and constituent groups has contributed to invigorating factional disputes that have splintered party interests. Appeals to class struggle that served to mobilize collective action during the war must now accommodate pluralist and subaltern demands (women, war wounded, environmentalist, children, migrant) to reinvent a coalition that is capable of winning national elections.

Coordination among local, national and international institutions has been one of the central challenges to post-war development, particularly in FMLN communities where decentralization was pulled down from below. A lack of clarity about appropriate roles and relations between NGOs, mayors and community organizations, and a climate charged by past rivalries, has hindered post-war collaboration. The war left a legacy of distrust between NGOs and mayors. Donor preferences contributed to this problem by failing to coordinate closely themselves. Competition between USAID and European bilateral agencies channeled resources to local development along two separate tracks, one offering incentives to municipal governments and the other offering incentives to NGOs. FMLN gains at the municipal level have softened divisions between NGOs and mayors. Within the NGO sector that was sympathetic to the FMLN, lack of coordination in the early post-war period reflected internal party divisions.⁷⁵⁵ Under increasing criticism that the NGO performance had not met post-war expectations of the FMLN base organizations and donors, the primacy of political allegiances has also receded.

Empowerment through conflict strategies place a premium on coordination. Conceptually, the actions by local organizations can range from an extreme of active adversarial

⁷⁵⁵ The PD breakaway and ultimate demise as a political party contributed to a similar fate for principal NGOs associated with the ERP. The NGO PROESA, for whom Ana Guadalupe Martinez was the iconic representative, has survived only with support from USAID and the IAF. FASTRAS, once the principal ERP NGO, was reportedly moribund in 1996. Two years later when it received a large, delayed grant from a European donor that apparently had not verified the organization's pulse.

competition to the other extreme of the reciprocal and planned actions and commitments necessary for collaborative political advocacy. There are both horizontal and vertical dimensions to this range of institutional coordination. The horizontal dimension involves institutions at a similar level, as within the field of NGOs or INGOs. Vertical coordination focuses more on relations between different nodes on the development food chain, as in the level of coordination or competition between NGOs and gremios, community organizations and international actors within a transnational network. On both axes, insurgent mobilization networks have achieved impressive levels of coordination.

Opposition NGOs have experienced several phases of coordination at a national level. The first phase involved efforts to coordinate the actions and policy positions of a diverse set of humanitarian NGOs in areas of wartime advocacy. CIPHES, the Interinstitutional Coordination of Human Promotion of El Salvador, was the first instance of an inter-agency coordinating body for 50 human development agencies. Another early network was the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA). These initiatives represented two examples of early attempts to coordinate NGO actions, focusing first on refugee relief but then shifting toward development.⁷⁵⁶ The goals of these informal networks were to share information, avoid duplication, establish alternative consultative mechanisms for donors and to advance incipient advocacy positions toward the government and the IFIs.⁷⁵⁷

In the second post-war phase, the focus of coordination shifted to development issues. A campaign to cancel the agrarian debt was led by a large umbrella organization, *Foro Agropecuario*, that reconciled much (although not all) competition among small farmer organizations to build a formidable advocacy vehicle. In response to Hurricane Mitch, civil society organizations at all levels came together to formulate alternative proposals for reconstruction that helped shape the government's position in the 1999 Stockholm Consultative Group meeting. All examples represent impressive levels of coordination between progressive NGOs that involved the most challenging goal of political advocacy, rather than resource

⁷⁵⁶ CIPHES was formed in 1985 and CIREFCA in 1989 as independent (i.e. of USAID) spaces for NGO coordination. See Pearce (199:62-64)

⁷⁵⁷ Interviews, Elena Martell, CIPHES, 1996; Elizabeth Hayek, UNDP NGO Liaison, Jan 27, 1999

mobilization or distribution. The modest results of these efforts also underscore the weakness and divisions that still limit the effectiveness of these post-war mobilization networks.

The unmet expectations of insurgent communities have forced local institutions to innovate beyond the boilerplate decentralization schemes motivated through government selective benefits. FMLN underestimation of the complexities of post-war development have also forced a revision of the “new popular economy” models with which many FMLN communities had experimented.⁷⁵⁸ High levels of cooperative productive experience and strong moral incentives were not easily transferable to the post-war context. Unprecedented resource flows could not offset the myriad challenges posed by the relative chaos of the first several years of peace. Delayed land transfers, poor sequencing of re-integration programs, the unsuitability of the insurgent cooperative model, the emergence of inequality, and an explosion of the accumulated frustrations of the war, all served to exacerbate an unfavorable environment structured by the government’s anti-agriculture adjustment policies.

Much has been written about the effects of war and the FMLN was its own worst critic. Many ex-combatants spoke of the decompression and exhaustion during the first years of the post-war period in their own lives and among their peers, some of whom were extremely disciplined during the war, but soon became self-indulgent, and degenerated into individualism, inequality, and machismo:

With greater democracy and personal freedom, many people simply exploded, wanting to unload all of their memories of the war, sometimes going to the extreme of doing the opposite of any direction from the outside. They began attacking all of the rules of being a combatant. Before the Peace Accords, few expected to live, or had plans for the future. After the war, a great frustration that had been suppressed under the pressure of discipline began to unravel. A missed childhood, years of sacrifice and suffering, resentment about injustices during the war that could not be talked about, the idea of being able to use the skills and knowledge acquired during the war to help themselves afterward, and the recognition of not winning. The idea of having to start from zero to catch up with those who didn’t serve, having lost all of one’s family, watching others abandon the principles of conduct while one struggled to maintain them, became the source of great resentment. Small loans were wasted frivolously or invested in businesses that quickly folded in the face of greater competition⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁸ The term “new popular economy” was coined by Aquiles Montoya in two books describing the experiences of emerging alternative economic organization and principles within insurgent areas of influence.

⁷⁵⁹ Interview Carlos Cortés “Adolfo”, former officer in the FPL, mayor of Tecoluca and now Congressional deputy, Feb. 1999.

Transferring the organizational strengths of the insurgency to this post-war context has proven no less challenging. FMLN NGOs were effective in the channeling of external support during the war, engaging in what one sector representative characterized as a role of “political accompaniment of a project that appeared to those involved like national liberation” (Orellana and Urbina 2004: 66). While the post-war material expectations of insurgent communities were obviously great, the windfall of NGO resources did not entirely facilitate a smooth transition. Many small organizations were suddenly awash in external funding, despite weak administrative capacity. For several years, financial oversight and accountability remained secondary to solidarity. As cooperation levels declined, greater professionalization of NGOs was expected.

Initially used as a filter to screen out FMLN NGOs from USAID reconstruction project funding, professionalization became a general standard applied by donors to all NGOs. New accounting requirements have forced organizations to devote more to administration and be less flexible with beneficiaries. By the mid 1990s, most donors had joined USAID in demanding strategic log frame planning, transparent administrative controls, gender benchmarks, improved quality of technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation reports, decentralized programming (toward the communities) and above all – results.

In 1996, the Salvadoran government began regulating the NGO sector with a law that raised technical standards for non-profit certification and established grounds for an external financial audit.⁷⁶⁰ Sufficient legal ambiguity in the prevailing law pertaining to legal recognition of civil society organizations served to make the application process a political issue that favored NGOs friendly to the ruling ARENA party, and disadvantaged those with ties to the FMLN. While the new legislation would depoliticize the certification process, it also forced all NGOs to adopt professional accounting standards, a precedent of transparency that most were not accustomed to providing even to their own clients.⁷⁶¹ Later banking reforms stipulated new lending requirements for micro-credit NGOs.

⁷⁶⁰ AGAPE, FUSAL, FUSAI, FLACSO (1996) Forum Proceedings on the Analysis and Recommendations about the General Law of Associations and Foundations, San Salvador

⁷⁶¹ Interview with Luis Salazar, FESPAD, 1995; Elena Martell, CIPHEs, 1995. The first government proposal was roundly rejected by wide cross-section of NGOs and INGOs, including FUSADES, and was withdrawn. The entire law would have been scuttled had international donors not threatened to pull out. A compromise law was passed in 1996. Crosby, et al. (1997: 38)

In FMLN zones of control, the demands for NGO professionalism from above signaled a crisis of identity that coincided with calls for more accountability from grassroots constituents. Prior to the proliferation of NGOs, it was understood that *gremios* advocate, while NGOs mobilize resources and execute. NGO critics argue that most *gremios* have collapsed in the post-war period. Political organizing has ceased, and with it, the bottom-up, capacity for self-governance. NGOs have occupied greater political space, despite their original function as technical advisors.⁷⁶² A survey of 80 Salvadoran NGOs in 1995 by Foley and Hasbún report a surprisingly low level of effort invested into participatory mechanisms, few coordination linkages to other institutions, and a reluctance to become policy advocates (Foley and Hasbún 1995). The authors find a correlation between these NGO attributes and reported professionalization. As cooperation flows tapered off in the mid-1990s, civil society leaders voiced concerns that NGOs were losing their way, becoming too politically accommodating, prioritizing consensus when consensus is neither possible nor the most effective means for achieving local goals. As a counterweight to NGO self-interest, some donors have also demanded greater local capacity building by NGOs to improve CSO self-management and independence.⁷⁶³

Some NGOs admit they are improvising in their post-war role, learning what they should and should not do, how to lead from below. The regional director of CORDES San Vicente argues that, “civil society or NGOs in general cannot solve poverty, small examples can show how poverty might be solved, but that job is for the state and private sector.”⁷⁶⁴ While struggling to comply with upward and downward accountability, many local NGOs have complained that the pendulum has swung too far and too fast in the opposite direction. The pressure for short-term results was viewed as an unfortunate break in the solidary relations of the past that disproportionately reflected domestic political shifts within donor governments rather than the reality of Salvadoran reconstruction. However, demands for upward accountability gave NGOs some leverage to resist unrealistic community expectations of NGO cooperation as an entitlement.

⁷⁶² Interview, Andres McKinley, Jan 15, 1999, then working as advocacy program representative for WOLA in San Salvador.

⁷⁶³ Interview, David Holiday, Director of USAID Advocacy project in El Salvador

⁷⁶⁴ Interview, Emilio Espín, CORDES San Vicente, 1998

These combined pressures have thinned the NGO field in general, and highlighted the differences between left and right NGOs in particular. Among the center-right NGOs these new requirements have fed a tendency to pick winners. Larger, more competitive partners are favored over those that require greater investment to meet donor expectations.⁷⁶⁵ These NGOs end up adopting the very clientelist and predatory attributes of the government and donors that they may have once criticized. The lack of results are typically attributed to the low capacity of beneficiaries, rather than flaws in the strategy. Despite espousing support for decentralization, their operations remain highly centralized, with most technicians living in the San Salvador and commuting to rural target population. Finally, there is a tendency to emphasize outputs (houses built, trainings held, credit repaid) rather than impact (empowerment resources and achievements). While these NGOs get stronger, the communities they serve fall behind.

In contrast, NGOs with an insurgent base have taken a different route, albeit with varying levels of success. After demobilization, the five political organizations within the FMLN exercised great influence in the formation and staffing of NGOs. The failure of the PRN to provide employment left the FMLN with little choice than to inflate the payrolls of many NGOs with unemployed militants. When cooperation flows dried up after 1995, NGO employment dropped dramatically and party intervention in hiring diminished.

In some instances, intervention by the party was excessive and contributed to resentment within the organization and among the local partners, in part due to the poor performance of projects. Appointments of ex-combatants to NGO jobs for which they had little or no experience quickly resulted in a weakening of the NGO in the eyes of the community. Party-NGO relations tended to reflect past differences in political organizing among the five FMLN factions. The ERP made some of the most egregious and documented errors in claiming NGO programs and capital, which for some is consistent with the party's historic disdain for mass organizing.⁷⁶⁶ The FPL's insistence on building mass organizations has engendered more autonomous relations with its respective sphere of NGOs. It is not clear how widespread a problem FMLN

⁷⁶⁵ A prominently placed Knute Rockne quote on the wall of Elizabeth Murcia, FUSAI manager, accurately frames the philosophy of this NGO, "The world wants more winners, not losers."

⁷⁶⁶ See Wood (2000: 102-103) discussion of ERP meddling in CODECOSTA and FENACOA in post-war Usulután. See Binford (1999) and (2002), McElhinny (2004) for a discussion of ERP heavy-handedness in the communities of northern Morazán.

intervention in the NGO sector became, but the decline of several high profile NGOs and gremios and setbacks in electoral gains in departments such as Morazán and Usulután are attributed to the hierarchical decisions imposed by party leaders.

Those NGOs and gremios associated with the FMLN that have developed some independence from the party also tended to reject full responsibility for local development and have instead steered the social tension created by the donor and community expectations into advocacy initiatives directed at the state, private sector and international actors. Among those NGOs with strong roots in the communities that they serve, there exists the political humility that NGOs are unlikely to ever play more than a complementary role to achieving sustainable development. “Their importance lies in making the point that poverty can be tackled, rather than tackling it to any large extent” (UNDP, 1993: 98-99).

It follows that NGOs pursuing empowerment through conflict strategies invest significant resources into political advocacy, in contrast to the general tendency among NGOs to eschew taking a role in public policy. Insurgent organizations were expected to use contentious political tactics, and in defiance of the USAID conditionality, have in fact done so to pursue their goals. What distinguishes the FMLN empowerment by conflict strategy is not only the choice and capacity to employ collective confrontational tactics, but their capacity to complement oppositional protest with effective conventional advocacy strategies. While there exists deep divisions on this issue, FMLN organizations tend to demonstrate a wider repertoire of advocacy strategies along a continuum separating what Korzeniewicz and Smith (2001) refer to as the “insiders” from the “outsiders”. Insiders refer to those groups favoring cooperation, gradual reform and a willingness to compromise with elite defined processes, while outsiders prefer denunciatory and oppositional pressure, the accumulation of social and political force toward systemic transformation. “The labels of ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ refer to a spectrum of positions on strategic choices regarding the extent to which organizations and networks should make use of - or seek to subvert or transform – the rules and procedures characterizing existing institutional arrangements” (5).

To varying degrees, FMLN local organizations demonstrate agility in switching from one track to the other, under conditions that are deemed appropriate. Opposition NGOs, municipal governments and gremios are active leaders in actions that range from blocking roads, marching to Presidential palace or stopping institutional processes. Many of these same organizations are

equally capable in preparing and lobbying viable legislative proposals, defending alternative development priorities, or participating alongside government officials in a variety of relevant commissions, working groups or consultations.

Still, the timing and balance of insider/outsider advocacy strategies remains a source of conflict within the FMLN. Reformist tendencies within the party argue for more investment in relative gains through aggressive engagement of political spaces that confer some legitimacy on the policy preferences and authority of the ruling party (tax policies, political reforms, broader political alliances). Orthodox factions within the FMLN tend to focus on absolute gains, which maintain relations with an ideologically narrower set of institutional contacts and prefer principled opposition to compromise. The balance of power between these competing tendencies is regulated by the flawed but meaningful democratic mechanisms within the FMLN to elect candidates, lobby preferences within the party, or defect as a number of ex-FMLN leaders have done as positions have polarized in recent years.

The shift in the FMLN as a single mobilization network has clearly been from an extreme outsider position of armed insurgency to a surprisingly sophisticated and increasing employment of insider strategies. To some degree, greater use of conventional strategies was inevitable given the FMLN's electoral gains. Credibility associated with local governance contributed to dramatic FMLN gains in the 1997 elections at the municipal and congressional levels, which signaled the first substantive political realignment of the post-war period. Local credibility derived not only from good governance but also out of support for empowerment through conflict strategies in a context marked by high inequality and political capture.

The stronger minority position of the FMLN within the assembly tipped the political balance in favor of the legislative vote needed to approve a substantial increase in the amount transferred to municipal government – the first substantive decentralization reform of the post-war period. Behind the lobbying of NGOs, a COMURES motivated by increased FMLN representation, increased demand by mayors from all parties, and several high profile donors, an FMLN led coalition in the assembly overrode a presidential veto to pass Decree 271, reforming the FODES law by raising the municipal quota to 6% of net current income (equal to \$82 million, or about 0.55% of GDP).⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁷ In 2004, FODES was increased to 7% of GDP, although well below FMLN proposed target of 15% by 2011.

D. CONCLUSIONS

At the outset of this dissertation, I posed the following questions: Why have local institutions become so important so quickly to post-war development in El Salvador? Is decentralization being pulled down by local actors from below, or pushed down by elites from above? The answer is that local institutions and decentralization have become necessary elements of post-war empowerment strategies – but in very different ways. Decentralization was viewed by ARENA as means to both expedite the privatization of the state and to stabilize its ruling coalition through the distribution of new selective benefits to party elites and some local actors. For the FMLN, decentralization provided the means for reinventing the principled incentives for collective action during the war and for channeling significant resources to local actors as a platform to mount contentious challenges at the national level.

Given the opportunity defined by shifting elite alignments and an unfavorable rural economic environment of high inequality, how have rural populations overcome collective action problems to make decentralization work? Competing approaches that have featured stabilizing and top-down decentralization versus regime challenging, contentious and bottom-up decentralization represent extensions of the wartime counter-insurgent and insurgent strategies to the post-war period. The emergence of local institutions in post-war El Salvador illustrate these two rival models of decentralized empowerment.

ARENA slowed the deconcentration of state authority to local government and firms and has sought, above all else, political and macro-economic stability. ARENA pushed decentralization from above, reinventing a counter-insurgent alliance with rural and local actors to safeguard economic reforms and to delegate residual administrative duties to local government. Decentralization permitted ARENA to cushion the effects of economic reform and to reward loyal local elites while reducing the political benefits for the FMLN, thereby preserving its governing coalition. Social safety nets figured prominently in this strategy. Participation of the poor would be confined to non-threatening activities channeled primarily

through mayors that effectively disregarded local inequality and was rewarded with projects. Out of this conceptualization of empowerment emerged the counter-insurgent local institutions that were incorporated into ARENA's vertical post-war mobilization network.

ARENA's preferred solution to collective action problems continues to center around a Hierarchy strategy that has served the party well in its twenty five year history. However, the demobilization and reform of the state security forces have limited the Right's ability to repress dissent, and have therefore forced ARENA to diversify its repertoire of CA strategies in the post-war period. The loss of majority control in the National Assembly has required greater negotiation (Contract), both among the minor players of its own coalition as well as with opposition parties. ARENA has also had to invest more in Market incentives (to placate a dogmatically loyal press and to provide increasing, although still anemic provision of public goods) to preserve its electoral plurality. Community strategies have even received a modicum of ARENA interest, although the goal is to recover a work ethic, a respect for property rights and social order that were perceived to exist in the rural sector before the war.

The FMLN organized local forces to demand both fiscal and administrative decentralization from below as a corrective to a clientelist, often corrupt central administration of public resources. The local institutions associated with the FMLN have attempted to combine the capacity for protest with effective and propositive local governance as a platform for acquiring the political capital necessary to derail ARENA's neoliberal reforms and win the Presidency. Lacking any control over state agencies, the NGOs, municipal governments and community organizations associated with the FMLN have acted with considerable autonomy if not incentives from the party to design and implement local reconstruction plans, pursue funding and channel local demands upward.

The FMLN has adapted an empowerment through conflict strategy to the post-war opportunity of decentralization by employing a shifting balance of all four collective action strategies, contrary to the more dire predictions about the insurgent pathological tendencies toward greed, opportunism, corruption and coercion.⁷⁶⁸ If we were to believe the arguments of Salvadoran elite and it's U.S. benefactors, before, during and after the civil war, FMLN rule would be intolerant, authoritarian, secretive, unrestrained in the violation of property rights and

⁷⁶⁸ Lichbach (1998, Chapter 8) provides an extensive list of scenarios in which rebel solutions to the CA problem create unintended and perverse consequences that undermine future collection action.

human rights. The predominant strategies of FMLN governance at the local level have been, in fact, more pragmatic - to perfect local governance through Contract (NGO promotion, self-rule) and Community (social oversight, reinforce equity norms) collective action strategies, despite the noted tension and interconnectedness between them.

Both strategies have had very different results. FMLN reliance on Contract and Community strategies are likely to have contributed to the reduction in local inequality in zones of insurgent influence, both in absolute terms and as an obstacle to collective action. Conversely, principal reliance on Hierarchy collective action strategies explains the persistence of inequality in areas of counter-insurgent influence. Both tendencies have left their mark on post-war development processes.

A final issue that is raised in this chapter is whether the proliferation of NGOs has increased non-elite bargaining capacity. A contest that began in the 1970s to win over the "hearts and minds" of the rural population foreshadowed the rise of the NGO and the municipal government as the two dominant and competing forms of social and political organization in postwar reconstruction. NGOs and municipal authorities were initially associated with insurgent and counter-insurgent projects, respectively. Donors took sides by funding either municipal government (in the case of several bi-lateral donors, mainly USAID) or NGOs working in conflictive zones (in the case of many European aid agencies). Communities in zones of wartime FMLN control supported NGOs and reserved hostility for many mayors. This pattern of institutional preferences was reversed in zones of government control. NGOs allied with the FMLN have prioritized contentious collective actions to demand expropriative redistribution of assets. Municipalities have emphasized conventional modes of participation to gradually improve lives through expansion of public services.

Do NGOs contribute to social and economic development or merely provide a substitute for ineffective or exclusionary government services. Large numbers of NGOs ought to indicate a most viable civil society. Yet, the NGO sector in El Salvador is fragmented, highly politicized at the margins, and in many respects given their numbers, spectacularly unable to advance a progressive social agenda.

Despite the praise heaped on the NGO sector, dependence on NGOs in local development schemes has a down side. In addition to challenges NGOs of all stripes have had in making the transition from wartime relief to promotion of economic development, a more fundamental

problem has emerged. NGOs were never intended, and in fact will never be able to mobilize the resources necessary for sustainable development. The value added of effective NGOs is in making modest, partial contributions to local development that demonstrate how development might be solved, and to empower local actors to act collectively to achieve these solutions. Instead, many NGOs have tended to assign themselves the full responsibility of solving local needs, and in so doing have failed to coordinate widely enough and have diverted local energy away from addressing structural obstacles such as inequality and political capture, or to look beyond the local environment for the required investments of the private sector and the state. Contrary to NGO intentions, this confusion over appropriate roles can be disempowering. Where the unmet expectations of insurgent communities have forced local institutions to innovate beyond the boilerplate decentralization schemes motivated through government selective benefits, these pitfalls are more frequently avoided.

A final question raised at the outset was how we might evaluate the pro-poor claims of decentralization – specifically in terms of empowerment? In other words, what conditions make decentralization work? An empirical comparison of these competing empowerment strategies in the three case study municipalities is taken up in the next chapter.

VIII. CHAPTER EIGHT: REGIONAL AGRARIAN INEQUALITY, AGRICULTURE & EMPOWERMENT

As the two main political parties in post-war El Salvador, FMLN and ARENA, have incorporated local actors into their post-war mobilization networks as a way of adapting wartime political experiences to shifts in the political opportunity structure. Both insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies promoted decentralization in response to a transition between new and old elites. This shift has been horizontal for ARENA – transferring control from one segment of the oligarchy to another and opening space for local actors was minimal and contingent. For the FMLN, the shift was vertical. Local actors have opened the space for themselves in a process that has been both expansive and spontaneous – rupturing in some localities the exclusionary pattern of development.

This pattern has been no more evident than in the disruption or continuity of land inequality and agrarian relations, which remains the single most significant factor in explaining the expectations for and performance of local institutions in a context of decentralized post-war development. This chapter shows that insurgent and counter-insurgent political experiences in the paracentral zone are associated with disruptive change and relative continuity with the pre-war agrarian structure, respectively. Where the power of elites, both the landowning and modernizing types, has been restricted by land redistribution, empowerment through conflict strategies have shifted agricultural development responsibilities to new local institutions and leaders. Where there is relative continuity in land inequality and relations between the various social classes, empowerment by invitation strategies circumscribe the options for local producers and decentralization of rural development resources are more prone to political capture.

Land distribution and agriculture are not as closely identified with the national debate over decentralization, but represent a significant dimension of this post-war development puzzle. Decentralization of the agricultural economy is best characterized by ARENA's efforts to carry

out the IFI strategy of privatizing the state's role in agriculture and moving toward a more market driven economy in land sales and production. Change or continuity in the local agrarian structure has triggered different responses to the crisis in agriculture that these reforms have caused. In settings of high inequality (Jiboa Valley) communities rely mostly on hierarchy and market collective action strategies that emphasize individual competition and tend to reward elites through the political capture of resources freed by agricultural policy reforms. Where agrarian inequality has been leveled (Tecoluca), communities have relied increasingly on Contract or Community collective action strategies, rooted simultaneously in new institutional solutions to the retreat of the public sector and solidarity based contentious challenges to this retreat. As a result, effective vigilance against political capture is greater. Where political experiences were less clearly defined and agrarian inequality left partially intact (San Ildefonso), competition between top-down and bottom-up contract collective action strategies have neutralized each other and consequently resulted in the weakest economic performance.

Given the inhospitable climate for agricultural development in the post-war period, the economic dividends of these empowerment strategies for producers have been low. Particularly between 1992 and 1998, most rural development initiatives have performed a stabilizing function more or less like a social compensation program. The vast majority of producers in the region are land-poor subsistence grains farmers, with little education and low risk propensity to adopt alternative methods. NGOs and to a lesser degree, the private sector, have attempted to fill the gap of downsized public support for the agriculture sector, but each has demonstrated deficiencies in their respective partnerships, including inadequate technical assistance, bias toward certain producer groups, ineffective organizational technologies and uncoordinated duplication of effort. The sobering results stand in sharp contrast to donor discourse of self-sufficiency and results that came to dominate the rural sector by the mid-1990s.

Just as important is the political capital that these initiatives have created (or not) in terms of the capacity to respond to the crisis in agriculture provoked by ARENA policies. These capacities include autonomous local participation, oversight and criticism by the poor in the many rural development initiatives sponsored by the state or NGOs in the paracentral region. Political capital also includes both the capacity for mobilized and contentious advocacy as well as pragmatic alliance building and proposition of viable alternatives in the face of a shrinking public commitment to rural producers.

In this chapter, I illustrate the link between post-war land inequality, agriculture and empowerment. In the first section, I present survey evidence of economic and human capital accumulation by rural and farming households in the paracentral region. In each of the following three sections, I discuss the principal differences in the impact of the war on land inequality and in turn, the post-war agricultural development strategies chosen in the three case study municipalities. Focusing on land inequality, the level of producer organization and social structure relations, these differences begin to highlight the contrasting empowerment strategies of invitation and conflict and signal the extent of change or continuity in the post-war structure of socio-economic relations and expectations for development.

A. LAND INEQUALITY AND POST-WAR AGRICULTURE IN THE PARACENTRAL REGION

The Land Transfer Program (PTT) represented the only formal economic redistributive mechanism in the Peace Accords. Even if the planned PTT was to have been fully implemented, resolving the problem of land access for as many as 75,000 adults, this would have left as many as 300,000 other landless farmers with no land. As designed, the PTT would not have corrected El Salvador's land inequality. It is also likely that land became less important to some FMLN commanders, many of whom relocated to urban areas, benefited from incentives to begin non-agrarian careers, or entered politics within which land was simply one of many competing issues. Population dynamics reinforced an FMLN electoral strategy that became oriented toward urban lower and middle class communities over its historic rural base.

However, to the FMLN base still living in the countryside, the transfer of land was at the center of politics and a shared vision for development. Wood points out that during the troop demobilization process, "FMLN field commanders in Usulután – many of them of peasant origins – repeatedly conditioned the concentration and demobilization of their forces on progress in the transfer of land, at times without the authorization from their central command" (2003:4-5). Carrying forward a capacity for autonomous collective action rooted in group solidarity (Community) and gradually distancing themselves from the Hierarchy strategies of insurgent central command, these and many other examples of local collective action in defense of hard

earned land rights prevented encroachment by former landowners and kept rural demands front and center within the FMLN.

In the departments of La Paz, San Vicente and Usulután of El Salvador's paracentral region (see map below), the PTT transferred 37,000 hectares of state owned and privately held land to 13,931 ex-combatants of the FMLN and Salvadoran military, in addition just over 22,000 civilian supporters of the FMLN.⁷⁶⁹ Without the benefit of an updated agrarian census, Table 8.1 illustrates the key shifts in the local agrarian structure between the case study municipalities, including the differential effect of the PTT program. In Tecoluca, an estimated 3,300 individuals gained access to land (42.5% of the agricultural workforce), compared to 11.5% (377 individuals) in San Ildefonso and none in the Jiboa Valley. The PTT redistributed a remarkable 54% of arable land in Tecoluca, 70% of which was already expropriated by ISTA, compared to 15% in San Ildefonso - over a third of which was owned by ISTA (DIGESTYC-EHPM 1974). No PTT land was redistributed in the Jiboa Valley. Recalling that less than half of the planned land redistribution associated with all reforms was actually carried out, the local redistribution in the municipality of Tecoluca is what El Salvador might have looked like if the full land reform had been executed.

Data from my regional survey of 432 landholders provide some indication of the variation in land inequality at the local level to which historical processes of land conquest and redistribution have contributed. For the entire sample of 432 landowners or renters, the Gini coefficient for land distribution was 0.55, much lower than the previously noted department land Gini coefficients. This difference is likely due to the absence of large landowners from the survey.⁷⁷⁰ The overall surveyed distribution of land among owners suggests that inequality is highest in the Jiboa valley (Gini of 0.57), exceeding the survey average.⁷⁷¹ The land inequality coefficient of 0.34 for Tecoluca and 0.47 for San Ildefonso are below the survey average,

⁷⁶⁹ PTT beneficiary and land data were provided by FUNDESA, as of Feb. 18, 2000, which included rolled over ISTA properties that were occupied by the FMLN in the final years of the war.

⁷⁷⁰ The largest declared property was 500 manzanas (350 hectares), which was removed as an outlier since the limit is 245 ha and if included it increased the overall gini to 72.

⁷⁷¹ The municipal level Ginis were calculated from the distribution of land among owners or renters in each case. One large landowner was excluded from a secondary municipal sample as an outlier. We interviewed 42 landowners and 31 renters in the Jiboa Valley, 72 landowners and 17 renters in Tecoluca, 53 landowners and 30 renters in San Ildefonso, and 150 landowners and 68 renters in other municipalities. The regional survey Gini values are not comparable to the department gini due to the absence of large farms in the former. Thus, the regional

Table 8.1 Paracentral Agrarian Structure before and after the war (1971-1998)

	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Jiboa Valley	San Vicente
	Hard-line Insurgency	Disputed Zone	Hard-line Counter Insurgency	Department
Pop. 1971	25,413	9,013	15,640	153,398
Pop. 1998	26,000	11,000	23,000	156,000
Post-war agrarian structure				
Total Land Area (ha)	28,500	13,600	7,300	118,100
Arable Land for Ag Use	18,474	10,892	5,265	74,143
Cultivated Land ⁷⁷²	11,533	3,170	3,845	42,740
1980 Ag Reform land (% arable)	2,250 (12%)	1,589 (14.5%)	515 (9.5%)	12,100 (16%)
1992 PTT land (% arable)	9,934 (54%)	1,625 (15%)	0	17,317 (23%)
Total Reform land (% arable)	12,184 (66%)	3,214 (29.5%)	9.5%	29,417 (39%)
Total Ag. Producers (1998) ⁷⁷³	7,750	3,300	6,000	28,000
1980 Reform benefic (% of total ag. labor force)	700 (9%)	250 (7.6%)	471 (8%)	2,700 (9%)
PTT beneficiaries (% of total ag labor force)	3,300 (42.5%)	377 (11.5%)	0	5434 (19%)
Land Inequality Gini	0.27	0.49	0.64	0.60

reflecting the higher percentage of municipal land that was transferred to local producers in the respective land reform processes. Despite the small sample, these estimates reinforce the perception that empowerment strategies in insurgent Tecoluca, hard-line counter-insurgent Jiboa Valley, and moderate counter-insurgent San Ildefonso have diverged significantly in terms of change or continuity with pre-war agrarian structures.

Despite these local shifts in agrarian structure, the post-war economic gains, particularly in agriculture, have been modest. Tables 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 compare progress on relevant economic and human capital indicators, based on data from a 1992 government municipal survey and the 1998 paracentral regional survey.

Economic capital is measured first in terms of current basic needs – access to housing, water, electricity and paved roads. Local basic service needs in the paracentral zone, like most areas affected by the conflict, were formidable following the war. As detailed in Table 8.2, the level of unmet basic needs in the early post-war period within the case study municipalities

Ginis probably underestimate the absolute land inequality in the respective municipalities, but are believed to be valid for relative comparisons.

⁷⁷² Total equals sum of temporary crop land, permanent crop land, prepared pasture, and forest.

⁷⁷³ Estimated as a percentage of total population, based on 35% economically active population over 15 years of age, 85% rural and 85% rural population employed in agriculture.

illustrates the disparity between urban and rural areas, as well as certain differences between the conflictive cases themselves. In 1992, one of every two Salvadoran families lived in rural areas, yet the levels of unmet basic needs were 50-75% lower in San Salvador when compared to San Vicente, or the predominantly rural case study municipalities. In San Ildefonso, which ranked highest among the three case study areas in terms of unmet basic needs in 1992, nearly 50% of the population was illiterate, 60% living in conditions of overcrowding, and 95% lacked access to water or sewerage. In Tecoluca, infant mortality was 41 per 1,000 births, nearly 70% lacked electricity and fewer than a third of school age children were enrolled in primary schools. By most accounts, the Jiboa Valley was somewhat better off (particularly in terms of education enrollment, illiteracy, and access to electricity). However, Jiboa Valley residents suffered very low levels of access to water or sanitation as well as poor health indicators.

Table 8.2 Indicators of Unmet Basic Needs in Case Study Municipalities (1992)
(Percent of households)

Indicator	San Ildefonso	Tecoluca	Jiboa Valley (simple ave.)	San Vicente	San Salvador	National Average
Ranking index	96	91	73.5	98	19.1	
Rural population pct.	79.2	84.6	63.6	57.9	19.0	49.6
Infant mortality	26.0	41.0	33.4	46.3	28.2	33.2
Illiteracy >10yrs	46.9	37.9	26.1	28.6	14.7	23.9
Overcrowding	60.3	49.7	48.6	47.4	19.7	32.7
Dirt floor house	72.8	65.7	63.3	57.1	15.0	39.5
Temp. house (rancho)	12.6	10.8	2.7	5.6	2.5	4.2
W/o water access	95.8	88.8	85.8	70.0	24.9	53.5
W/o sanitation	64.3	40.5	23.7	29.7	4.6	18.9
W/o sewerage	97.2	89.9	95.4	79.5	29.2	60.3
W/o electricity	61.7	69.2	37.5	44.3	8.8	30.7
Net enrollment (grades 1-6)	34.3	28.9	54.5	48.3	65.3	50.3
Net enrollment (grades 7-9)	14.1	15.3	26.9	27.0	41.6	28.8
Enrollment all ages (1-6)	55.6	58.1	47.4	47.3	39.7	45.6
Enrollment all ages (7-9)	43.1	45.6	44.3	45.2	40.8	42.2

Source: Government of El Salvador (1995) based on 1992 population census data. Infant mortality is per 1,000 births; Illiteracy is defined for the population 10 years of age and older, Overcrowding is defined as more than 3 persons per room; water access includes public spigots; Enrollment all ages includes adult students

Turning now to Table 8.3, we might first compare the pre-war socio-economic status of case study families. Three indicators of parent socio-economic status provide additional information about the pre-war agrarian structure in the three municipal cases, specifically: whether a family owned or rented land prior to the war, the head of household's occupational status, and if a family member migrated to seasonal harvest as a source of off-farm employment. Jiboa communities reported the highest pre-war land security, with 38% of families owning land, and another 58% renting - producing a total of 96% of families having access to land. Land access drops to 25% ownership and 78% total access in Tecoluca, and 24% ownership and 67% total access in San Ildefonso.⁷⁷⁴ Head of household occupation status suggests that over 80% of all households relied principally on agricultural employment. In the last category, Tecolucan respondents reported the highest dependence on coffee, cotton or sugar harvest income. Given the sub-human conditions of the harvest work, migration was typically an indicator of extreme

⁷⁷⁴ The average reported farm was very small, about 0.5 hectare, consistent with reported inequality data.

poverty. Pre-war dependence on the harvest was high (54%) in all cases. This data on parent's socio-economic status suggests that Jiboa Valley families may have held a slight material advantage over the other two cases before the war.

Jumping ahead to 1998, San Ildefonso continues to exhibit the most severe human and economic capital deficit, although these conditions most likely prevailed before the war. Jiboa Valley residents reported an average education of 5.1 years, while the other two municipalities reported an average education of less than 4 years. Respondents in Tecoluca reported a lower average education level (as well as age, and family size) - signifying a deprivation of human capital attributable to the war. The education gap is especially striking among women, with a full two years difference separating women in Tecoluca and San Ildefonso from the average among women in the Jiboa Valley, the secondary municipalities, and San Vicente in general. Given the participatory obstacles faced by women, the link between education, participation and empowerment might hinge on a gender axis.⁷⁷⁵

Private access to water refers to the percent of households reporting a private well or piped in source. The percentages in Table 8.3 do not reflect access to potable drinking water nor do they address the irregularity of service.⁷⁷⁶ San Fonchanos comment ironically that they lack sufficient drinking water and struggle without electricity in most homes, despite the fact that municipal lands were donated and families were relocated for the construction of the hydroelectric dam that sits in plain view of their homes. The Jiboa Valley has a higher percentage of people with access to electricity, roughly twice the number reported in San Ildefonso or Tecoluca. Despite the privatization of telecommunications, nearly four of five in each municipality lack fixed line or cell phone service.⁷⁷⁷ The UNDP has shown that both service access and service quality tracks El Salvador's pattern of high inequality, with poorer

⁷⁷⁵ Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1985) have shown that among socio-economic resources, education is the strongest predictor of political participation.

⁷⁷⁶ The San Vicente Productivo reports that in 2000 only 46% of the San Vicente department population have piped water access in the home. Water from wells often disappears in the dry months and wells are frequently ruined by floods, but have the distinct advantage of providing relatively cost-free water. Piped systems are slightly more reliable in the dry months, although outages are frequent, and carry the added burden of a monthly charge. Water quality is poor, often non-potable, both cases. Wells and piped systems are comparable, thus grouped as a single category.

⁷⁷⁷ Privatization of telecommunications has helped increase the number of installed telephone lines from about 35 per 1,000 to over 100 (compared to 235 for East Asia).

households enjoying disproportionately lower access and poorer quality of services than top quintile households.⁷⁷⁸

Tecoluca held a slight advantage in terms of permanent housing, most likely due to the 2,000 new concrete block houses built between 1992 and 1998 in projects associated with the Peace Accords. In San Ildefonso, over a third of those surveyed were living *bahareque* style houses (a combination of plant fiber and mud) - typically a sign of extreme poverty.⁷⁷⁹ Finally the Jiboa Valley reported a lower proportion of beneficiaries of recent local development projects, although at least 60% have reported benefiting from at least one. The 2001 earthquakes destroyed over 8,000 houses in the three case study regions, nearly 80% in the Jiboa Valley, 50% in Tecoluca, and 15% in San Ildefonso. Many of these have since been replaced by permanent houses.

Transport infrastructure is now considered the top development priority in much of Latin America, and is clearly an obstacle for the intensification of agriculture or the creation of non-agricultural employment in rural areas. El Salvador made modest gains in infrastructure improvements, particularly in terms of tax incentives for maintenance but most investment was biased toward urban areas.⁷⁸⁰

Of the 12,840 km of highways in El Salvador, only about 20% are paved and among the non-paved roads less than 10% were in good condition before a concerted rural roads plan was underway in 1999.⁷⁸¹ However, only a small fraction of the rural road network has been slated

⁷⁷⁸ UNDP (2003), World Bank (2004). Regional inequalities in water distribution are striking. In 1994, the San Salvador Metropolitan Area with 26% of the nation's population consumed 64% of all potable water, while the four eastern provinces with roughly the same percentage of the population settled for access to only 5% Chavarria (1994), Rosa and Barry (1995). In addition to corruption associated with ANDA, the state water company, the failure of several IDB loans designed to privatize water distribution is attributed to the refusal of unmetered higher income water users capacity to block the reform. PSI (2000) and interviews with IDB officials in the water sector.

⁷⁷⁹ While adobe block houses possess certain thermal and cost advantages, the clay-straw construction material has proven inadequate for long term needs, collapse under flooding or tremors (both relatively frequent in the zone), and contribute to respiratory problems by producing higher internal airborne particulate densities. Despite local preferences and the low cost of adobe, I do not consider such housing permanent.

⁷⁸⁰ IDB (2005: 5) The establishment of FOVIAL – a road maintenance fund was created in November 2000 with resources generated from \$0.20 per gallon surcharge on fuel. The outsourcing of road maintenance has been part of the overall privatization of the Ministry of Public Works, which was also a condition of several IDB loans and resulted in the reduction of public staff at MOP from 7,400 to only 650 in 2005.

⁷⁸¹ World Bank (1998) and FUSADES (1996) estimate the average distance between the Salvadoran farm and the closed paved road at 5.8 km.

for improvement (785 km by 1998). Some 6,150 km of rural roads (almost two thirds of the highway network) in have long been a top priority for reactivating the rural economy.⁷⁸² Over 20% of all roads (mostly tertiary dirt roads) are the responsibility of municipal governments. What rural roads that have been improved tend to benefit the non-poor (in part due to the prioritization of lowering costs for agriculture export producers and tertiary roads that link municipal seats to the primary highway network). Average distance for extreme poor households from paved roads continues to be 80-90% greater than the non-poor in rural areas.⁷⁸³

Less than 20% of all municipal roads in the study area are paved, with San Ildefonso having the lowest (3%). The principal entry roads to the town centers of the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso registered as priority investments as well. Most of the road network is comprised of unimproved dirt roads that are largely impassable during the rainy season. Tecoluca, one of El Salvador's largest municipalities in terms of total area, has 110 km of roads. The coastal highway and the highway connecting San Vicente to Zacatecoluca consist of 28 km of paved roads. In 1995, 70 km of rural roads were unimproved and another 12 km were of slightly higher quality.

In 1998, local development project activity, measured by the reported beneficiary status, is highest in Tecoluca and San Ildefonso, likely a reflection of higher levels of reconstruction activities directed toward ex-combatant communities.⁷⁸⁴ Over two thirds of the paracentral region surveyed in 1998 reported benefiting in some way from development projects underway in their community. Of these projects, almost 90% were infrastructure or services projects. Only 3.5% were identified as production support projects and 2.1% were identified as organizational strengthening.

⁷⁸² FUSADES 1996. Rural roads do not include 1,050 km of tertiary roads.

⁷⁸³ World Bank (2004). The average distance to the closest market is also a third higher for the poorest households.

⁷⁸⁴ Self-reporting as a beneficiary of a project is also a subjective ascription, as projects were underway in nearly every community surveyed and it depended on the evaluation of the respondent as to whether they felt they would eventually realize a benefit.

Table 8.3 Case Study Municipalities – Economic Capital Indicators

	Survey Sample Descriptives					EHPM HH Survey 1998	
	Jiboa Valley n=155	Tecoluca n=155	San Ildefonso n=119	Secondary Munis n=482	Total Sample N=912	San Vicente [Rural]	National Average [Rural]
PARENTS SES							
Family owned/rented land prior to the war	38/58	25/54	24/43	28	29/41		
Parent's Occup. Status prior to war (% non-farmer)	14	17	18	23	25		
Family migrated to harvest prior to war	60	69	52	47	54		
% who reported family member killed in war (a)	59	77	41	47	54		34.0
ECONOMIC CAPITAL							
Ave. Education (women)	5.2 (5.1)	3.6 (3.2)	3.8 (3.1)	5.6 (5.1)	4.9 (4.6)	4.2 [2.8] 4.2 [2.8]	5.1 [5.0]
% w/o Private access to water	33.5	20	44.5	68.5	31.6	47.1	34 [64.4]
% w/o Electricity	14.8	60	62.2	31.7	37.6	[44.3]	18.5 [41.6]
% w/o Telephone (fixed or cellular)	80	85	73	N/A	N/A		
% w/o Permanent House	67.8	57.4	89.9	62.1	65.9	42.6	4.0
% Roads paved (1998)	10	21.5	3	-	-		52
% Project benefic.	62	81	80	63	68		
Ave. Monthly Income	\$148	\$115	\$133	\$180	\$171	\$289 [\$197]	\$410 [\$224]
% Hholds Rec. Remittances	15	15	16	24	20	18	16.3
% Farm occupations of EAP	37	41	51	37	40	37.8	23.5
% Indiv. Agric. Monthly Incomes >=Rural min. wage of \$75	57	46	22	34	38	42	
AGRIC. INDICATORS (% farm hh)							
Ave. Owned Plot (ha)	2.4	2.2	3.9	5.1	3.3	3.0	
Ave. Rented Plot	0.7	1.0	1.1	2.0	1.5	1.0	
Ave Plot	1.9	2.1	3.3	3.0	2.7		
% Cultivate Basic Grains Only	50	68	96	74	73		
% Report Prod. Increase 97-98	60	46	34	32	40		
% Farmers w/access to Tech Assist	35	50	19	36	36		20%
% Produce for consumption	6	13	47	35	29		
% Sell produce independently	63	58	35	31	41		
% Sell produce thru intermed/coop	31	29	19	34	30		
% Access to credit	33	43	18	36	34		[12%]
% Use Organic Fertilizers	38	27	11	18	21		
% Access to irrigation	7	29	11	18	21		5%
% Storage capacity	47	47	42	21	34		
% Own Tractors/Ox Team	1/20	0/21	0/14	2/10	3/14		

Source: 1998 Paracentral Region Survey, Rural San Vicente derived from 1998 EHPM survey. For 1998, the minimum rural nominal wage of \$75 compares to the real rural minimum wage of \$48, the average nominal rural wage of \$135 and urban nominal minimum and average wages of \$144 and \$264, respectively.

Reported overall monthly income was highest in Jiboa Valley, almost twice the rural minimum wage of \$75 per month, and slightly above the urban minimum wage of \$143.

Reported average wages were lowest in Tecoluca. In all cases, reported wages were substantively less than the average of \$197 for rural San Vicente. Slightly more than 1 in 6 families reported cash remittances from family members working outside El Salvador, a percentage similar to the departmental average and with little difference between cases. More recent estimates of households receiving remittances do indicate a higher percentage in San Ildefonso, and considerably lower percentage in Tecoluca. FISDL estimates presented in a baseline study for San Vicente Productivo estimate municipal poverty levels in 2002 at 80% for San Ildefonso, 58% for Tecoluca, and 54% for the Jiboa Valley (Melara et al. (2004: 32).

Farming remains one of the poorest paying occupations. Among agricultural occupations, 57% of respondents in the Jiboa Valley earned an equivalent of the urban minimum wage or more. Only 23% of San Ildefonso agricultural occupations reported similar earnings. Fewer than half in Tecoluca make more than the minimum wage from their agricultural work. Low agricultural income is inversely linked to dependence on farming as the principal occupation. San Ildefonso reported the highest farming population - 51% of the respondents. In Tecoluca, fewer than half, and in the Jiboa valley as low as 1 in 3 were dependent on farming.

Diversification and intensification of production are widely considered to offer the only possibilities for security in micro-parcel farming. The size of the average land parcel varies little between cases or with respect to the departmental average, when taking into consideration the higher average land qualities in Tecoluca and the Jiboa Valley.⁷⁸⁵ One important change is that average farm size has likely fallen significantly, particularly in Tecoluca and San Ildefonso where post-war average farm sizes are approximately one fourth the 1971 average. A second notable difference is between owners (3.3 ha ave.) and renters (1.5 ha ave.).

Alternatives to basic grains are most likely to be found among Jiboa producers, and least likely among San Fonchanos, an indication of diversification that is contingent upon both land quality and the concentration of the best land and productive resources among fewer producers. Higher subsistence production is another indicator of low diversification. On an index from 1 to 7, crop diversification was estimated at 2.77 for the Jiboa Valley, 2.22 for Tecoluca and 1.11 for

⁷⁸⁵ A subsample of 467 agrarian occupations in the Paracentral survey includes 309 landowners and 121 land renters, and 70 agricultural laborers. Many respondents qualified for more than one category.

San Ildefonso, compared to 1.83 for the other municipalities.⁷⁸⁶ Similarly, San Ildefonso producers are much more likely to consume the food they produce (47%), indicating a combination of disincentives to sell, such as storage and transport costs. Producers in the Jiboa Valley and Tecoluca sell some part of their harvest independently (58-63%), or through local intermediaries and cooperatives (29-31%).

Only two of every five producers in the entire survey reported an increase in production between 1997 and 1998. Tropical event, El Niño in 1997, brought drought conditions that reduced production levels in San Ildefonso and parts of Tecoluca, but especially in Usulután to the east (explaining the low survey average). Jiboa Valley communities were least affected by the drought, with over 60% of Jiboa producers reporting increases in production. Tecoluca was slightly above average (48%). Access to credit and irrigation can also improve production and reduce risk exposure to climatic events, although both resources seem to be relatively unavailable to most. Tecolucan producers reported a greater access to irrigation. However, the flatness of the land and proximity to the Lempa river has also been a curse to occupants of the coastal valley. Floods have destroyed crops, homes and livelihoods for thousands living in the lower Lempa valley five times in the last decade. Some 43% the producers surveyed in Tecoluca reported access to credit, compared to 33% in Jiboa Valley and 18% in San Ildefonso.⁷⁸⁷ Technology in the form of access to organic fertilizers is similarly distributed. Finally, just below half enjoy some form of storage capacity for grains and the survey found only 3 producer owned tractors in the region, compared to 444 alone reported in Tecoluca in 1971. Ox teams for plowing are relatively more common, found in about 20% of the farms.

Overall, the survey data summarized in Table 8.3 show that all three communities contain a great number of households living in poverty (defined at less than \$200 per month in household income). Of the three, the Jiboa Valley communities report a small advantage over Tecoluca and San Ildefonso. San Ildefonso may have a slight human capital advantage over Tecoluca, but in most agricultural and basic needs categories, ranks below the others. If these results may be

⁷⁸⁶ Producers were asked to identify the range of crops cultivated. The answers were ranked on a crop diversification index scaling from 1 for basic grains only to 7 for mix of basic grains, fruits or vegetables, and export crops such as coffee, sugar cane or non-traditional crops (cashews, etc.). Cattle ranchers were not included.

⁷⁸⁷ Tecoluca reported a wider distribution of both credit and technical assistance, both which are due to the greater presence of NGOs.

viewed as the achievement of the first generation of post-war agricultural development projects in the paracentral region, their comparison leads to the conclusion that nearly all performed below expectations, perhaps unsurprising given the economic and political climate.

The frequency of prioritized local problems is summarized in Table 8.4, based on the 1998 Paracentral Survey. The lack of basic infrastructure and services is far and away the most pressing local problem. However, vulnerability to violent crime ranks very highly (17% in the Jiboa Valley and 13% in Tecoluca) and a cluster of problems associated with economic insecurity ranks third. Between the three case study municipalities, there is slight variation. Economic conditions, poverty, land insecurity are reportedly to be worse in San Ildefonso, least bad in the Jiboa Valley. Violent crime is not considered to be a major problem in San Ildefonso (1%). Lack of local organization is considered a significant problem (6%) only in Tecoluca.

Table 8.4 Survey Results: Local Problem Identification by Case Study Municipality

Top Local Problem	Count	Percent
Lack of Basic Infrastructure	259	28.4
Lack of Basic Services	247	27.1
Insecurity-Crime	159	17.4
Unemployment	90	9.9
Economic conditions	43	4.7
Lack of organization	28	3.1
Corruption	25	2.7
Land insecurity	12	1.3
Environment	12	1.3
Other	14	1.6
NS/NR	23	2.5
Total	912	100

Why so few of the post-war rural development initiatives seem to have achieved significant impacts in terms of improved farmer incomes, crop diversification, or production turns our attention to the respective empowerment strategies deployed to address the post-war agricultural crisis. The next section discusses how elites and local development institutions were incorporated into post-war insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks to contest the

distribution of agricultural resources and control over policy space being abdicated by the public sector.

B. COUNTER-INSURGENT CONTINUITY, ARENA AND THE JIBOA VALLEY

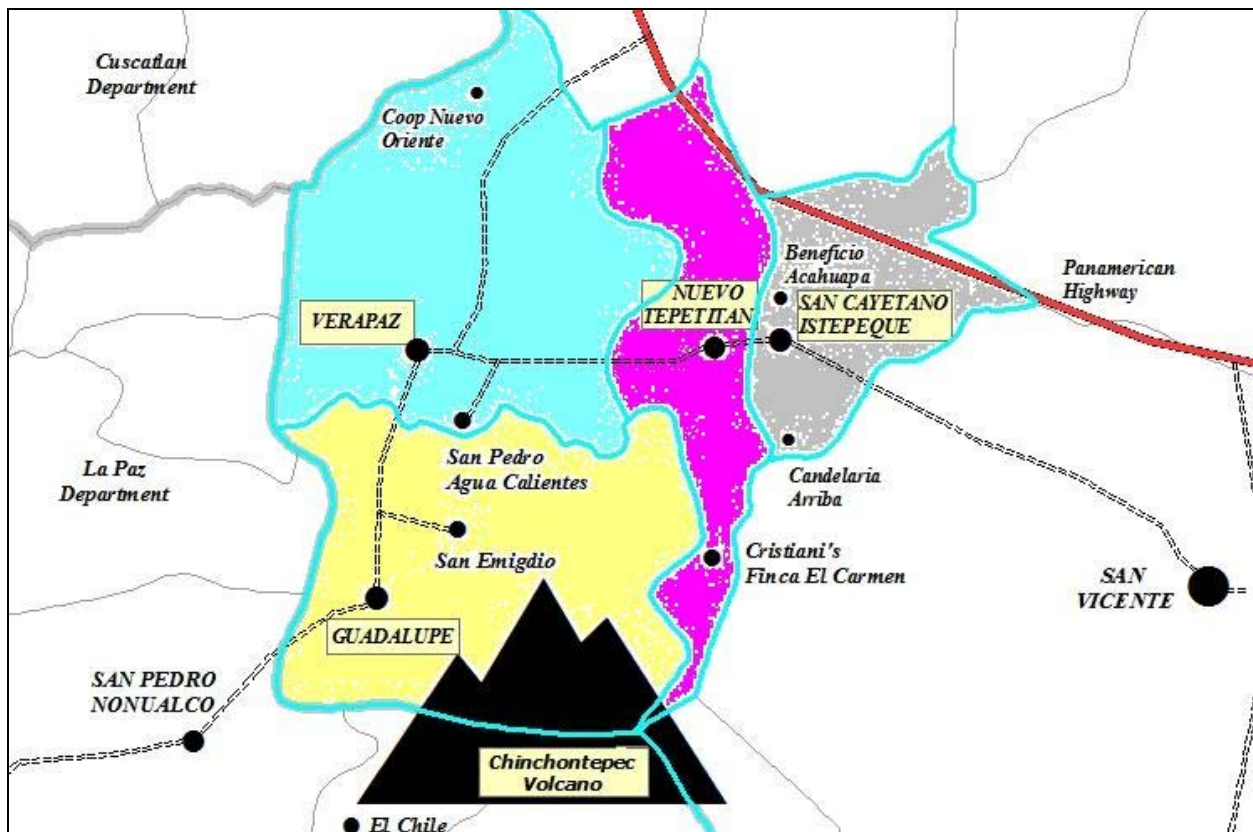


Figure 8.1 Map of the Jiboa Valley Microregion

The Jiboa Valley, composed of four municipalities of Guadalupe, Verapáz, San Cayetano and Nuevo Tepetitán, represents the political experience of hard-line counter-insurgency that is associated with negligible change in the pre-war agrarian structure. For ARENA, the concession

of land transfer and the implicit legalization of land takeovers by the FMLN implied either the diminished significance of land in government's economic strategy, or the inherent tradeoff

between the old agrarian elite (particularly in the east) and the modernizing elite (less dependent on agriculture, although including the coffee elite, based in the west – a region less affected by PTT) (Wood 2000). Affected landowners did organize in the early post-war period, influenced by the agrarian party elites within ARENA and the PCN, and threatened not to sell to prospective PTT buyers. However, either through FMLN or ONUSAL mediation, this resistance never endured.⁷⁸⁸ The division between the old agrarian and modernizing elites within ARENA played out differently depending on the relative influence of each faction in a specific region, and became a significant factor in the success or failure of land redistribution under PTT. In San Vicente, the post-war local politics between ARENA's old guard and the FMLN were as bitter and contentious as the war itself.

The trajectories of Alfredo Cristiani and Roberto Angulo illustrate the contest for representation of ARENA in the paracentral region as a microcosm of national trends. The fortunes of President Cristiani himself were much less dependent on land, having diversified into banking, insurance, and commerce. Regional elites representing the old guard of ARENA, such as Roberto Angulo, were less diversified and therefore much more opposed to the land transfer program and the consolidation of FMLN power in general. However, few if any of Cristiani's land assets, mostly located in the Jiboa Valley, were affected by the PTT in San Vicente, in contrast to significant reductions in the Angulo estate located in FMLN controlled Tecoluca.⁷⁸⁹

FMLN leaders identified Angulo and other ARENA landowning hardliners from the region with early violence targeted at FMLN municipal and regional leaders and argued as well that they had a hand in the repeated flooding of the lower Lempa valley caused by excessive water discharge from the *15 de Septiembre* dam after heavy rains and an unannounced opening of the flood gates. These and other measures were viewed as pressure tactics by dispossessed landowners to recover farms lost in the war. As head of COENA from 1997-2000, Cristiani also intervened personally to discipline mayors if they collaborated too closely with FMLN

⁷⁸⁸ See Wood (2003) for Usulután and Kiefer (1995a, 1995b, 1996c) for northern Morazán. An incentive for this negotiation included the cancellation of agrarian debt, which benefited many large farmers.

⁷⁸⁹ El Carmen, Cristiani's prize coffee estate, was targeted by the FMLN, but according to former FMLN deputy for San Vicente, Marta Valladares, this was the first property that refused to sell to the Land Bank. Interview, June 18, 1998. Another coffee property owned by the Cristiani family, El Perical, was sold and assigned to demobilized Armed Forces.

leaders.⁷⁹⁰ A community leader from Guadalupe complained that ARENA politics were placed above effective local governance. He recounted a familiar incident when Roberto Angulo, then Assembly President, appeared during a campaign making promises that were never delivered. When the mayor, Juan Cerritos complained, he was told that he had to choose between his loyalty to Angulo and the party over the community's needs.⁷⁹¹



Figure 8.2 *Chinchontepec* Volcano from the southern ridge of the Jiboa Valley

Inequality and the prevailing fear of authority both contribute to low expectations for post-war development among agricultural producers. The absence of any land transfer meant that few in the Jiboa Valley expected the change in the structural power relations of local institutions. The

⁷⁹⁰ Interview, USAID official, alleged that Cristiani pressured local mayors (in the paracentral region) when outreach or collaboration with FMLN groups exceeded ARENA's comfort level. In another instance, COENA under Cristiani unilaterally announced the reduction of the Usulután City mayor's salary from \$4,500 to \$1,700.

⁷⁹¹ Interview, ADESCO leader, Guadalupe, July 1, 1998.

post-war landscape is dominated by a mix of landlessness and subsistence renting (perhaps two thirds of the agricultural labor force) mixed with a number of family farms in a patchwork of small plots in the Jiboa Valley.⁷⁹² A third of all farmers in 1971 were renters on plots averaging less than one hectare, and this situation has barely changed despite some 471 farmers gaining access to land through the 1980 reform (mostly Finateros). A small number of medium to large landowners are expanding their farms through local land purchases. The landless and renter households combine wage labor during on the coffee and sugar farms or as San Salvador maids and maquila factory workers with subsistence livelihoods at the margins. Among the landless and land-poor, there is nostalgia for the return of the *patrono* to provide work as well as a fear that an FMLN Presidency would nationalize all production and restrict freedoms.

Expectations for the future are placed in the hands of God, or the benevolence of “*los acomodados*.” With Bishop Aparicio’s death in 1996, it is the latter that continue to set the day to day spiritual agenda in the Jiboa Valley. In Guadalupe, the bells toll nightly calling forth hundreds of rich and poor alike to worship, clearly underscoring the convening power of the church. However, the fervent religious devotion remains almost exclusively sacramental and paternalist in its class blindness. Guadalupe parish priest, Leonardo Rodríguez, recognizes that the root of rural poverty can be traced to local inequality, but redistribution of resources is a delicate issue. He describes himself as a conservative within in a conservative diocese. His few homilies about inequality offended certain individuals, so his approach is gradualist, looking outside the region for solutions and careful not to alienate certain sectors. He expressed interest in inviting U.S. military training program, *Fuertes Caminos*, to dig wells in Guadalupe. Special masses are reserved to pray for emergencies, which in one typical instance was the theft of an uninsured parish vehicle.⁷⁹³

In contrast, the poor that survived the worst wartime violence quietly attribute their collective suffering to the sins of a few. Criticism of the government or one’s neighbors is still against God’s will - punishable then as well as now. An ex-Armed Forces member from Nuevo Tepetitán suggests that voting is still considered a risky choice and could lead to problems. “The

⁷⁹² Based on interviews with agronomists working in the region and comparisons with 1971 agrarian census.

⁷⁹³ Interview, Father Leonard Rodriguez, Guadalupe, July 6, 1998. The church in Guadalupe was destroyed by the 2001 earthquake, along with hundreds of houses. This real emergency may have expanded the horizons of church involvement in reconstruction activities.

people don't vote because they have been led to believe that voting will not provide food on the table. Work provides food, not voting. Perhaps a person can be harmed by meddling in politics. Better to work with a clean mind, without fear of having offended anyone.⁷⁹⁴ Spiritual justice is considered a higher power than the rule of law. One woman stated, "Where God is present, we shall be consoled. I have no fear of speaking because God will fix everything."⁷⁹⁵ Aspirations for the future prosperity are similarly placed in God's hand. "Only the Virgen knows, because we are here at the will of God."⁷⁹⁶

Typical are the coffee communities of La Laguneta and El Chile, located near the summit of the *Chinchontepec* volcano, described by local health promoters with a powerlessness toward elite domination that has frustrated local development efforts:

The Espinozas left in 1984 when the FMLN burned their coffee hacienda (San Antonio La Laguneta) and the farm was left unprotected and unclaimed by the 120 families that now live in the vicinity. Most were former civil patrollers that were disarmed by the FMLN and now work as day laborers, selling firewood or in a microenterprise. No effort has been made to reactivate coffee and fruit production, in part because the property is embargoed by the bank. The desire for economic reactivation depends upon the return of the *patronos* who could provide more stable jobs. In an adjacent finca owned by the Iglesias family, landless peasants from El Chile tried to negotiate the sale of land for the construction of badly needed housing, but the Iglesias refuse to sell. Direct relations between the *mozos* and *dueno* do not exist, but are mediated by the *mandador*. The community is unwilling to push harder out of fear of greater reprisals."⁷⁹⁷

Another woman from Nvo. Tepetitán offered a similar view:

It was better before the war, things were less expensive. Now things are more expensive. The hacendados left for the capital, and there is no work on their estates."⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁴ Survey Interview, Armed Forces veteran, Nuevo Tepétitan, August, 1998

⁷⁹⁵ Survey Interview, woman from La Virgen, Nuevo Tepétitan, August, 1998

⁷⁹⁶ Survey interview woman, San Pedro Aguas Calientes, August, 1998

⁷⁹⁷ Interview, Ernesto Hernández, La Laguneta and Julio Alfredo Crespín, El Chile, July, 1998.

⁷⁹⁸ Woman from La Virgen, Nuevo Tepétitan, 77 yrs. old, August 1998

Coffee continues to dominate the post-war agrarian structure of the Jiboa Valley despite representing as few as 20% of all farms. The *Association Cafetalera*, which claims 160 members in the Jiboa Valley and 12,000 nationally, criticizes rich and poor alike for squandering a pre-war coffee culture where investment, savings and a work ethic were valued. Land inequality is acknowledged, but attributed to “overpopulation and low reproductive discipline among the poor, rather than stingy landowners.”⁷⁹⁹ Land inequality among coffee producers is only one among several essential factors that determine profitability, including altitude, level of technology, age and density of trees, capital costs, processing capacity and finally, price. Larger growers tend to own the best land (between 1,200 and 1,800 m), invest more and generate yields that exceed by four times the national average, and secure the best price, leading to profits per hectare of \$5,000 to \$6,000. The profit gap between a medium size and small grower can far exceed the ratio in land inequality.⁸⁰⁰ Small and medium producers take a small share of total coffee profits, which go disproportionately to the retailers, processors, and traders, while only a few cents of every \$2 dollar cup of coffee is paid to small producers and temporary laborers for the beans picked to brew it.⁸⁰¹

An Inter-American Development Bank grant designed to strengthen the 240 members of the Nonualcos Cooperative had mixed results. Credit was extended to about 35 members of the cooperative as coffee prices began to slump in the late 1990s, boosting production levels and financing major improvements in cooperative *beneficio*. However, producer incomes declined.⁸⁰² Despite a restriction in the IDB contract that specified a 10 hectare and \$1,500 annual income ceiling for eligible participants, these rules were ignored by permitting a number of medium sized growers in Guadalupe to participate. The larger growers ultimately took

⁷⁹⁹ Interview, Cuno Salvador Maties, Paracentral Regional Director, Asociación Cafetalera, July 15, 1998, Guadalupe.

⁸⁰⁰ Using conservative estimates from price and producer costs in recent years, the difference in profits for a typical 25 hectare and 2.5 hectare coffee finca can reach 70:1, when difference in farm size is only 10:1.

⁸⁰¹ Comparisons and coffee value chain estimates are taken from Gresser and Tickell (2002: 24). Coffee harvest laborers in El Salvador make about \$3-\$5 per day.

⁸⁰² IDB Technical Assistance Project ATN/SF-4273-ES and SP/EP-93-10-ES (1995-1998) for \$650,000, of which approximately a third went to Cooperative Nonualcos, the largest of six coffee cooperatives that participated under the Union of Salvadoran Coffee Cooperatives (UCAFES). Final Program Execution Report by Appropriate Technology International (Feb. 1999: 22). mimeo.

control of the cooperative board of directors. The historic distrust between the 10% medium sized and 90% small landowning members of the Nonualcos Coffee Cooperative prevented the cooperative from supplying enough member produced coffee to make their own *beneficio* profitable. Neither could they purchase inputs collectively or pool financial resources with other cooperatives to lower credit transaction costs.⁸⁰³

A technician advising the cooperative under the IDB grant contract recognized that large growers have rigged the market and exercise private exit options by diverting production to alternative buyers or seeking credit from preferential sources, destroying collective trust:

Cristiani owns two banks and a fertilizer import agency and will never have problems finding credit or cheap inputs, while the majority of cooperative members are dependent on the Agricultural Development Bank (BFA) and the five firms that control the inputs market. The obstacles to fair competition are concrete, but not insurmountable. In the best scenario, the challenge for small producers is to manage dependency more efficiently, making UNEX (the largest coffee exporting consortium on which Cristiani holds a seat on the Board) work a little harder for its slightly smaller paycheck. (Interview, Victor Mencía, ATI, Oct. 4, 1998)

Max Menjivar, one of the medium landowning members of the cooperative, had accumulated property in Guadalupe and in La Paz, owned several businesses and had administered for the Borgonovo family one of the two coffee purchasing houses in the region for 45 years. Like other provincial elites, he casts his small fortune as self-made and distinguishes his hard earned achievements with those of the larger *patronos* that appropriated most of the best lands when *ejidal* restrictions were lifted, or in his words, “when the land was free” a century ago:

When I worked for Mauricio Borgonovo, they supported me. When a piece of property was about to be put up for sale, he advised me to buy it. I didn’t have the \$8,000 or \$12,000 the property was asking, but little by little...I am a founding member of the Nonualco cooperative, but most of us are small producers, no more that 20 hectares. It was I that guided our decision in Guadalupe to join, because I like cooperativism. I also owned a bus transport company and belonged to a transport cooperative and learned there are many advantages to cooperatives in terms of reducing costs. (Interview, Max Menjivar, July 4, 1998)

⁸⁰³ Interviews with Cooperative members, Guadalupe, Aug, 1998 and Victor Mencía, ATI representative, Oct. 4, 1998. Small is defined by Mencía as between 1.5 and 7 hectares. The Nonualcos *beneficio* requires a capacity of 20,000 *quintales* to run a profit, but in 1997 only 16,000 qq were processed in 1997 despite UCAFES total production of 24,500 *quintales*. Members preferred to sell a portion of their coffee to middlemen – often to get a better price or quicker payment.

Small producers argue in private that this image of Menjivar as a self-made man disguises a history of predatory lending to the poor through which he has acquired many land titles when minor debts were not repaid. Smaller *finceros* grumble over the misuse of past funds by a cooperative board dominated by the largest producers, while blame is recast by the board on the poor judgment by individual producers.⁸⁰⁴ No attention in the IDB program was given to addressing structural impediments within the national or international coffee market, and the individualist strategies prevailed. Despite some positive effects of the IDB program, the benefits appear to have excluded the majority of coffee producers in the region.

PRODAP is a much larger internationally funded program designed to support 5,000 producers in the paracentral region, including 170 in the Jiboa Valley, 100 in Tecoluca and 10 in San Ildefonso.⁸⁰⁵ The \$20 million program began in 1993 to provide technical assistance and organizational training to small farmers that did not benefit from the PTT or demobilization process, most of whom were renters on marginal soil. After six years, PRODAP had become another social compensation fund, having fallen short of most of its goals in raising farmer incomes, diversification, credit, conservation measures or commercialization.⁸⁰⁶ The program proved unable to ensure compliance by participating government institutions in areas of extension and credit causing unforeseen gaps in coverage. Alternatives that involved bypassing the BFA or CENTA (the state extension agency) with communal banks or greater reliance on NGOs were vetoed by the government, which opposed measures that devolved too much administrative authority to the communities. Lack of coordination with local NGOs or municipal governments increased the programs dependence on state extensionists. However, CENTA extensionists were facing layoffs of 50% of its labor force, pending implementation of a World

⁸⁰⁴ Cooperative members did not want to be named. Interviews with representatives of ISTA and CENTA repeatedly characterized the failure of agrarian reform on profligate and irresponsible peasant culture.

⁸⁰⁵ PRODAP I is funded by U.N. International Fund for Agriculture, the Bank for Central American Economic Integration and the Salvadoran Government. The target population is the rural population of San Vicente and Cabanas, farmers owning or renting less than 7 mz.

⁸⁰⁶ IFAD (1999) Some social infrastructure improvements were financed, but Debt delinquency was 40% before the portfolio was restructured.

Bank loan to restructure the Ministry of Agriculture.⁸⁰⁷ As a result, the agency saw little incentive to expand its role in PRODAP and withheld services due to pre-occupation with job security. The Director of PRODAP also noted that even when the program was effective in improving the competitiveness of smaller producers, the control of regional markets by the largest growers could suppress prices and financially cripple these new competitors.⁸⁰⁸ Both uncompetitive market practices and a retreating state severely limited PRODAP's impact.

Sugar cane is the second most important crop in the Jiboa Valley. As with coffee, small and even medium sized producers complain that price setting by the closest mill favors the largest producers and arbitrarily gouges the profits of the weak. The sugar growers' cooperative is moribund due to unpaid debts, member indifference toward selling collectively or challenging unfavorable prices. An initiative to organize the eighty sugar *trapiche* operators (CANISA *panaleros*) was only beginning in the late 1990s.⁸⁰⁹

A PRODAP agronomist argued that the organizational challenges were largely responsible for the disappointing results. "In the Jiboa region, there exists a legacy of disorganization, perhaps as a result of the war and the perception among producers that organizing is dangerous. Most small producers choose individual strategies, which are more secure but less profitable."⁸¹⁰ The challenges of enterprise modernization are certainly not unique to the Jiboa Valley, but the lack of attention to the legacy of distrust left by persistent inequality has prevented much progress. The prevailing control of the Jiboa Valley by larger landowners rests on weak community organization, a collective nostalgia for the pre-war economy, and a latent fear of jeopardizing the minimal social contract to which they still cling.

So too among the political elites of the Jiboa Valley, inequality has inevitably exacerbated tension among local, provincial and cosmopolitan elites. Prior to the 2003 elections, founding ARENA member Roberto Angulo, four term Guadalupe mayor, Juan Antonio Cerritos

⁸⁰⁷ A \$40 million loan was extended to reform the Ministry of Agriculture and its respective extension agency. A second \$50 million loan was approved in 1996 to modernize the countries cadastral and land registry lists. Both loans have been controversial in their tendency to support the interests of large growers over those of small producer groups. Foley and Thale (1997).

⁸⁰⁸ Interview, Frank Escobar, PRODAP Director, Feb. 8, 1999. San Vicente.

⁸⁰⁹ Interview, Mauricio Alfaro, Verapaz, Aug. 11, 1998; Demetrio García, San Benito, Guadalupe; sugar growers

⁸¹⁰ Virgilio, PRODAP, Aug. 12, 1998

and six other ARENA officials from San Vicente made a highly publicized switch to the rightwing rival PCN. ARENA's vote preference in the Jiboa Valley has been reduced to 35% in recent elections as Verapáz alternates between ARENA and PCN support, and San Cayetano and Nuevo Tepetitán have elected FMLN mayors. Dissatisfaction with the control by the modernizing elite faction over COENA, which translated into disputes over the distribution of patronage, blocked ascent within the party, or excessive intervention by COENA in local affairs, all of which led to this exodus that lifted PCN legislative and mayoral gains and eliminated ARENA's working majority in the Assembly. On the day that Angulo was credentialed as a Congressional deputy, he was nearly killed by a hail of stones that smashed threw the windows of his vehicle on a road leaving Guadalupe, where he'd taken part in the inauguration of Cerritos as PCN mayor.⁸¹¹ Political tolerance remains a work in progress in the Jiboa Valley.

In many ways, this horizontal shift in the balance of elite politics that has done little to alter the hierarchy or market individualist collective action strategies that prevail in the Jiboa Valley. Few NGOs have worked there. One of the principal NGOs in the region is *Fundación Guadalupe*, the FUSADES and business community's response to the expanded FMLN presence in National Reconstruction Plan communities. The focus of *FundaGuadalupe* has been almost exclusively on basic infrastructure and service provision, but it has also been an active participant in efforts to form a micro region in the Jiboa Valley. FundaGuadalupe's 50 individual members are all originally from the region, but most live in San Salvador and work on a volunteer basis. Their interest in local development is driven in part by a self-interested desire shared by many who now work in the contaminated and congested neighborhoods of San Salvador to retire in their hometown.

The director of FundaGuadalupe argues that the institution has been abandoned by FUSADES in terms of financial support and has faced competition with area mayors and the church regarding control during ribbon cutting ceremonies for public works or assuming responsibility for problem projects.⁸¹² Despite efforts to build alliances with a wider range of leaders and institutions and moving toward interventions that address structural obstacles to economic development in the region, the party allegiance of most members of the Foundation

⁸¹¹ *La Prensa Gráfica*, May 3, 2003.

⁸¹² Interview, Emilio Henríquez, Executive Director, FundaGuadalupe, San Salvador, June 29, 1998

have prevented these innovative efforts from getting off the ground. A bipartisan effort to establish a departmental economic promotion commission, *Iniciativa Vicentina*, was chaired by FundaGuadalupe and the CORDES Foundation, but ended prematurely when the ARENA officials withheld local endorsement.⁸¹³ In 1996, FundaGuadalupe included FMLN legislative deputy and ex-commander from the region, Marta Valladares, as an ally in the lobbying campaign behind the paving of the Jiboa Valley's principal access road with funds from a pending international loan.⁸¹⁴ The two ARENA mayors retreated from the advocacy initiative and were rewarded with government funds to pave small segments of the road that leads into their respective municipal centers.⁸¹⁵ Competition between FundaGuadalupe and local mayors is not simply institutional rivalry, but political due to the perception that the Foundation is not squarely in ARENA's camp.

First with FUSADES and then ARENA, the ambition of FundaGuadalupe has fallen on deaf ears as requested funding is refused when the projects fall outside party control. The director of FundaGuadalupe has vowed to move from constructing schools to a culture of development with or without ARENA, but has avoided confrontation by not disclosing to local partners any details about ongoing conflicts between the Foundation and provincial elites. By withholding this information, the Foundation has reserved for itself the power to acquiesce or challenge, a choice that ultimately reinforces the status quo power relationships. To the extent that FundaGuadalupe has broken with the paternalist and party oriented interests of the FORTAS Foundations, it has been boxed in by the low expectations and fear of conflict among the members and the passivity of the beneficiaries. Participatory alternative development projects are circumscribed by the condition that they co-exist with a highly inegalitarian local economy. In nearly every initiative that has challenged loyalties between the provincial elites of the Jiboa Valley to the ruling coalition, the initiatives have failed.

⁸¹³ Interview, Emilio Espín, CORDES,

⁸¹⁴ Panoramic road proposal, mimeo. The road was subsequently paved in 2005, several years after the 2001 earthquakes and after San Vicente Productivo Program helped allocate funds and attention to it.

⁸¹⁵ The Ministry of Agriculture also refused to endorse the project proposal by including it in an appropriations request because it ran the risk of enhancing the political credibility of opposition politicians.



Figure 8.3 Cristianí's Beneficio Acahuapa with coffee pulp deposit pits, adjacent to decorative plant export facility in San Cayetano Istepeque

Where exceptions exist to the pattern of top-down authority, they are often associated with FMLN influence. Residents from communities in San Cayetano organized to protest the pollution induced health problems caused by Cristianí's beneficio. Despite support from local ex-combatants living in the area and FMLN Congressional leaders, resistance by the ARENA mayor and Environmental Ministry allowed the problem to continue.⁸¹⁶ José Evanol Funes, the first FMLN mayor of Nuevo Tepetitán (1997-2000) the Jiboa Valley, promised to open an investigation of irregularities involving the sale of municipal property to Cristianí when the Beneficio was built in the 1970s. However, the coffee crisis and recent earthquakes may have delivered the decisive blow by forcing the closure of the beneficio in 2002 and with it the loss of 200 jobs.

⁸¹⁶ Interviews, Lino Murcia, La Entrevista, San Cayetano Istepeque; Maria Marta Valladares, FMLN Congresswoman.

In the Jiboa Valley, we see continuity between the pre-war and post-war agrarian structure and the associated socio-economic relations. Economic reconstruction has depended on state institutions, with little autonomous initiative from local producer organizations. Expectations for local economic development are low and the risk of political capture of new resources is high.

C. INSURGENT DISRUPTION, THE FMLN AND TECOLUCA

For the FMLN, the PTT was a far cry from the initial goals of the insurgency but it has come close in places like the insurgent case of Tecoluca. Some 3,300 beneficiaries of the post-war Land Transfer Program (PTT), almost 40% of the producer population in Tecoluca, will eventually receive legal ownership to this land.⁸¹⁷ When asked about the differences before and after the war, the inevitable was response given by most Tecolucans emphasized land. “Before the war, half of Tecoluca was owned by twelve families. This land is now owned by 2,000 peasants.” In fact, the number of family farms in Tecoluca (greater than two hectares) has increased from only 227 in 1971 to well over 4,000 in 1998.

Large private farms have been redistributed, although the agrarian landscape in Tecoluca is now a complex mix of medium and small properties; native Tecolucans and settlers from other provinces, cooperative, association and private property rights; and every political affiliation. Initially, ISTA controlled 30 reform properties in Tecoluca, but the FMLN occupied 18 of these (over 70% of all occupied land) and these state farms were rolled into the PTT program, in addition to 14 large occupied private farms. An estimation of the post-war agrarian structure in Tecoluca is summarized in Table 8.5.

⁸¹⁷ Of the FMLN PTT population, 83% are “tenedores” and 17% are demobilized ex-combatants, although the distinctions are blurred in many cases. There is considerable confusion about PTT occupancy rates and therefore impossible to say what percent of this estimate actually resides in Tecoluca.

Table 8.5 Estimation of Post-war Land Tenure in Tecoluca
(% of 1994 ag labor force)

Landless farmers	6%
Small Renters (<2 ha)	15%
Small landowners (<2 ha)	10%
1980 Land Reform beneficiaries	25%
Land Transfer Program beneficiaries	40%
Medium Size Farmers	3%
Large Farmers	1%
Total	100%

Source: Grajeda, Cummings, Moreno, Almendárez (1997:89) *Does not reflect FAES-PN PTT land distributed to demobilized Armed Forces or National Police.*

In all, 7,500 hectares of prime farmland were distributed to 2,300 FMLN ex-combatants and *tenedores* (average PTT parcel was about 3 hectares). As many as 1,000 PTT beneficiaries in Tecoluca are demobilized members of the Salvadoran Armed Forces, although a fraction actually occupies the 2,300 hectares of land assigned to them.⁸¹⁸ ISTA managed cooperatives (including FINATA) still represent 2,250 hectares (12% of all local arable land), which have been transferred to some 700 cooperative members and individual Finateros. In addition, large private owners holding of as much as 100 hectares (the permissible reserve limit under Phase I of the agrarian reform) are still about 1% of the labor force, although the total amount of land in large farms has declined. Medium sized owners holding much less land are scattered throughout the municipality. Finally, renters and day laborers continue to represent a smaller but relatively significant percentage of the local labor force. Land reform in Tecoluca, according to one source, has reduced landlessness from 85% in 1971 to 20% in 1995 (Grajeda, et al. 1997: 95).

⁸¹⁸ Molina (1999: 112) reports that over 70% of the land transferred to ex-members of the Armed Forces nationally remained idle, representing some 10,500 hectares.

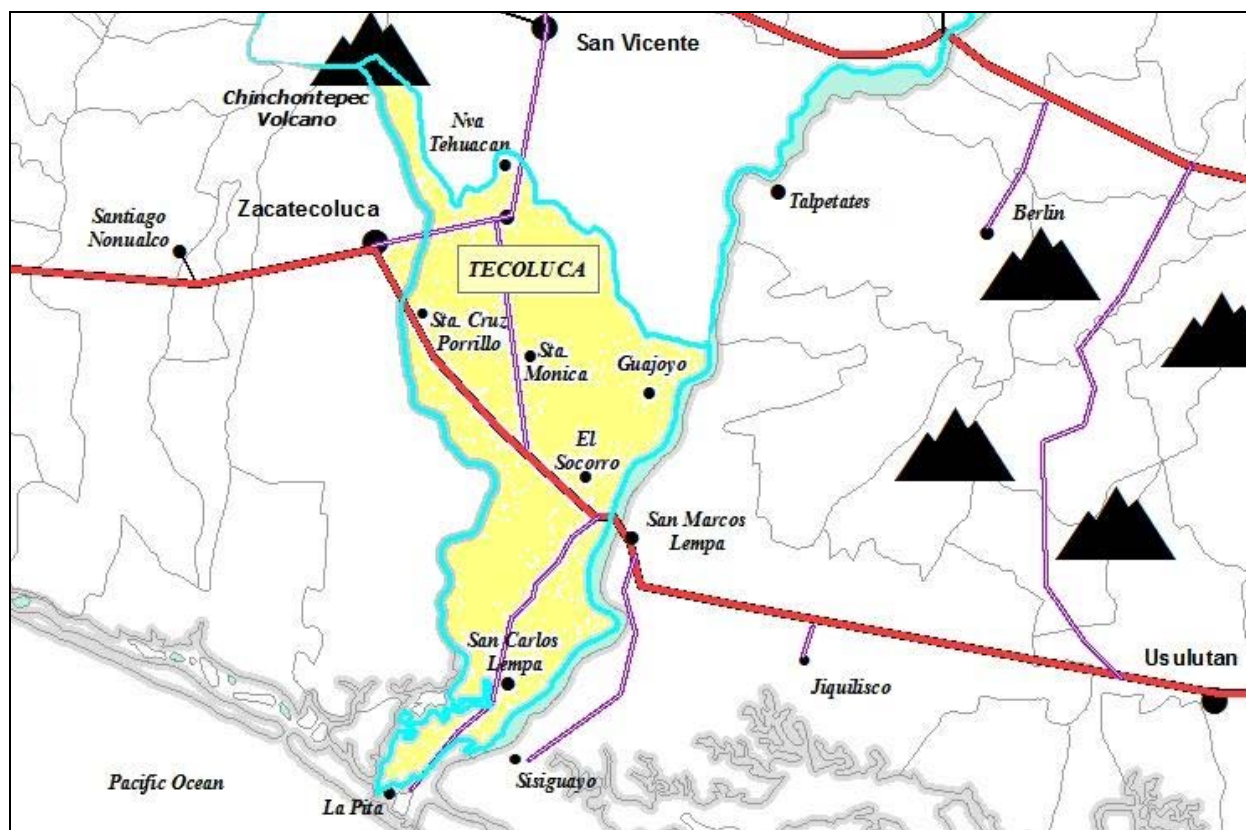


Figure 8.4 Map of Tecoluca

In 1994, Nicolás García was elected as the first FMLN mayor of Tecoluca and one of only fourteen in the country, at a time when Blanca Avalos de Angulo, García's former grade school teacher and wife of Roberto Angulo, was the appointed ARENA governor of San Vicente. Two decades after the massacre at *La Cayetana*, the protagonists of the crucible event for the revolution in San Vicente now faced each other on new political terrain. An FMLN municipal government and a host of other local organizations presided over a panoply of post-war reconstruction needs that began with one fundamentally new feature—one of the most dramatic reversals in agrarian inequality in the country. However, the local agrarian structure is far from monolithic, economically or politically. Former landlords are conciliatory and many manage their property from outside Tecoluca. The remaining provincial elites, albeit reluctantly, couch their hopes for an economic recovery on FMLN leadership. FMLN ex-combatants have steadily gained control or assumed key roles in the local institutions in Tecoluca (the police, police inspector's office, the justice of the peace, health promoters, teachers, municipal government and

the National Assembly). Both in terms of having neutralized the economic impunity of local landlords and by removing their control over most local institutions, the FMLN opened space for alternatives.

Change did not come without resistance. The Angulos and other reactionary Vicentian landowning elites in ARENA were instrumental in efforts to block the FMLN from winning municipal office in 1994. Violence and intimidation marked the first campaign and governing demanded skills akin to survival as combatants during the first years as municipal council. On Nov. 10, 1994 after a visit to USAID to lobby for funding to improve the feeder road to La Pita connecting the coastal highway to communities in the lower Lempa basin, three ex-FMLN commanders and local officials in Tecoluca, David Merino Pablo Parada Andino, and Carlos Cortés were dining at a restaurant in San Salvador.⁸¹⁹ Two men approached the table and fired, emptying their pistols a point blank range. Franco was killed after seizing one of the attackers, Parada Andino and Cortés were wounded, the latter escaping over a wall and finding the police. No arrests were made.⁸²⁰

Nicolás García and Carlos Cortés reported escaping similar attacks by armed assailants near their homes, as well as constant surveillance and sabotage of municipal property. The kidnapping of a municipal employee was derailed when García and other ex-FMLN commanders were able to identify the kidnappers and issue an equally convincing counter-threat of retaliation.⁸²¹ Based on insider intelligence, García argued that ARENA landholding elites were behind most of violence, expecting that a campaign of fear would prevent the FMLN from winning local office and set in motion a means for recovering lost property.⁸²² Although many ex-combatants travel armed, FMLN leaders in Tecoluca have prevented violence from escalating in retaliation to provocations from the right.

⁸¹⁹ La Prensa Grafica, Nov. 11, 1994. Merino was a member of the FMLN central commission, departmental director and head of PTT land transfer process in Usulután. For Parada Andino, a former zone commander and employed at the Tecoluca justice of the peace, this was the third attempt on his life. Cortés was the sindaco of Tecoluca and would eventually succeed García as mayor of Tecoluca in 2000.

⁸²⁰ Interviews, Carlos Cortés, 11.17.98; Nicolás García, 3.4.99; Pablo Parada Andino, and press reports.

⁸²¹ Interview, Carlos Cortés, Nov. 17, 1998. Subsequent investigation determined that 12 ex-soldiers living in Santa Cruz Porrillo, Tecoluca were responsible in the kidnapping. Six are now in jail, four others were found dead in sugar cane fields near their homes and two were still “at large.”

⁸²² Interview, Nicolás García, Tecoluca, April 1999.

The post-war church in Tecoluca is also sharply divided. The official church, consisting of two priests, is conservative and uninterested in politics. The abandonment of the liberationist ministry of the pre-war period left faithful open to evangelical and protestant alternatives that quickly appeared. In parallel, the popular Catholic church has re-emerged in FMLN communities, bringing priests from outside Tecoluca to offer mass and help organize catechists.⁸²³ As before, the pastoral struggle around restoration of peasant rights must work within the hierarchy of a conservative church that has expelled over 200 seminarians and reassigned dozens of priests over ideological differences since the appointment of the current archbishop. The liberationist church that remains active in Tecoluca. In the view of one organizer, the role of the municipalities Communal Pastoral Development Association is to:

assure that the experience of Archbishop Romero is never forgotten, to instill in the actions and behaviors of the youth the compromise of a living religion. Romero was not interested in restoring the Cathedral (the obsession of current Archbishop Saenz Lacalle) but in constructing a church among the poorest. This pastoral plan is reflected in the work plans of local NGOs that try to integrate Christian, communal and productive leadership, although with very little funding from the hierarchical church. Independent of official recognition by the bishop, this work will continue. (Miriam Abrego, ADESCO Pastoral President, San Carlos Lempa, December, 1998)

To surmount opposition from the state and local elites, many newly landed farmers deposited high expectations for post-war development with the local institutions. Post-war collective action strategies built on the foundation of improved land equality to tackle other local needs. The *Grupo Bajo Lempa* (Lower Lempa Group) consortium represents one of the most promising insurgent collective actions in Tecoluca.⁸²⁴ The Grupo Bajo Lempa is a diverse set of social and economic organizations that work with 50 communities, populated by 12,500 people in the lower Lempa valley of Tecoluca and parts of Zacatecoluca to the west.⁸²⁵ Cummings

⁸²³ See Binford (2004) for analysis of post-war religious organizing in Morazán. David Rodríguez, who had been expelled from the church, was now living with his wife and children in Zacatecoluca, and served a term as legislative deputy in 1997 for La Paz.

⁸²⁴ This section and subsequent chapter sections on the development institutions present in Tecoluca draw heavily from several monographs on Tecoluca that were written in the 1990s (Graceda, Cummings, Moreno, Almendárez (1997) and Fogaroli and Stowell (1997) as well as a detailed analysis of the business initiatives in the Lower Lempa by Cummings in his 2005 doctoral dissertation. The authors of all three studies have provided generous access to background studies and relevant notes that informed which this analysis.

⁸²⁵ Annual Report, Fundación CORDES, various years; Grupo Bajo Lempa, 2002, mimeo.

(2005) describes the creation of this highly innovative network of associative business ventures, combining small-scale agriculture and cattle production, agro-industrial processing, organized commercialization and the business services (financing, agricultural inputs, machine leasing and repair, among others).

The driving force behind the Grupo Bajo Lempa Initiative is the CORDES Foundation, one of the five principal FMLN NGOs, which has had an office in Tecoluca since 1991, and has employed up to 20 staff.⁸²⁶ CORDES provides direct support for 250 producers, producing 100 hectares of organic cashew trees, and 500 additional hectares of vegetables, fruit, livestock and basic grains. By 1997, CORDES managed a regional budget of a quarter of a million dollars in Tecoluca – more than three times the entire local tax revenue stream of the municipal government.⁸²⁷ Agroindustry investments that CORDES has steered to the lower Lempa region of Tecoluca include a cashew processing plant, a dairy processing plant, a 30 hectare agriculture teaching - demonstration farm, and an organic sugar mill. The majority ownership of these and other rural service enterprises has been transferred to micro-regional community council (Sistema Economica Social, SES) and the workers associations, although the authentic appropriation of control by the latter remains, according to Cummings, one of the most significant challenges facing the Grupo Bajo Lempa (Cummings (2005: 179), SES (n.d., 1998).

The crown jewel of the Grupo Bajo Lempa is a small agroindustrial processing factory that can fry, shell, dry, peel, sort and package as much as 200 metric tons of organic cashews, which are cultivated on now subdivided PTT cashew farms that were left idle for over a decade during the war.⁸²⁸ The growing, processing and selling of cashews (in both national and international markets) employs about 150 people at wages that hover just below the standard monthly maquila wage (\$158). Cashew profitability is not as profitable as coffee, but is superior to most other crops in the region in terms of risk and income. Organic certification and the

⁸²⁶ Created in 1987-88 along with several other NGOs in anticipation of the transition to peace, with historic ties to the FPL, CORDES began with 1 staff person and has since become a stable development institution. In 1998, CORDES employed over 124 people nationally and is working in six of the countries 14 departments.

⁸²⁷ CORDES national budget was \$2.1 million for that year.

⁸²⁸ Interview Rafael Rodriguez, SAMO Plant Manager, Jan. 13, 1999; and Cummings (2005: 154-168).

recently acquired “fair trade” status will increase the marginal profitability achieved for the first time in 2003, and production volume has grown steadily from 60 MT to 225 MT in 2004.⁸²⁹

The fair trade certification encourages constant improvement in the strengthening of the growers association toward full ownership and control of the processing factory, including awareness of their rights to unionize. Cummings describes the “certain apprehension in the Directive Council,” that this option created, “due to their perception that the organization of a labor union would lead to labor/management conflicts. However, this has stimulated the process of incorporating workers that meet certain established criteria, as cooperative owners of the processing plant.”⁸³⁰

While perhaps mostly at a demonstrative level, the Grupo Bajo Lempa’s chosen economic activities and consistency in pursuit of goals have opened the space for alternatives to subsistence agriculture to be considered. A central feature of future economic success, rather than an arbitrary by-product or obstacle, is the local ownership of the process even as power relations are subjected to unprecedented public scrutiny.

CORDES maintains a regional office in Tecoluca and the majority of its regional employees (perhaps most importantly – the regional director) live in the communities, although a number of agronomists and technicians commute to San Salvador on the weekends. The constant presence of CORDES within the community it serves cannot be understated in terms of a demonstrated commitment (reflecting a Community strategy of strengthening local norms) to share both the costs and benefits of the development experience. Accessibility of the NGO also lowers the bilateral transaction costs of monitoring and enforcement of the social contract that CORDES holds with the communities of Tecoluca. Responsiveness and the simple demonstration effect of leading by doing are all advantages to CORDES work that none of the other principal NGOs in the case study municipalities, and few in general, are able to meet.

Heavily dependent on subsidized investment and modest in terms of generated employment (356 local jobs), production or income improvements, the Grupo Bajo Lempa initiative has expanded slowly, but shares many features of any struggling rural enterprise and by

⁸²⁹ Op cit, 2005:160-161, of the 2004 volume, 70% was organic. One study estimated the financial equilibrium point for the cashew factory at about 100 MT if 100% organic. An additional 175 hectares of cashew production was contracted by the Tecoluca processing facility in order to increase production to meet international demand.

⁸³⁰ Op cit, 2005: 166-167.

itself does not represent a viable solution to rural poverty in Tecoluca. Despite certain successes, improvised experimentation has resulted in sizable losses for many producers (associated with experiments in multi-cropping, organic sugar cane, and incompatibilities between certain fruit and vegetable seeds with soil varieties on coastal farms. Audits, impact evaluations, internal controls and information systems for most projects were largely missing prior to 1997.⁸³¹ Thus it was impossible to say whether the benefits of any investment outweighed the costs. Following Hurricane Mitch and a series of other climatic events, as much as 80% of the \$1.3 million in credits issued to local producers was in default by 1998.⁸³²

On the other hand, CORDES and other NGOs in Tecoluca have created an informal insurance system for rural producers that is generally absent in the rural sector. While there is a high propensity for failure among small enterprise in general, even higher with rural SMEs, a big gap filled by NGOS like CORDES is in lowering the risks and consequences of failure, or to lower the costs of recovery. While far from perfect, CORDES seems to be allowing learning to happen (i.e. learning from failure) without that experience leading to a reconcentration of land and power.

Moreover, the Grupo Bajo Lempa experience for the most part stands in contrast to examples of failed NGO development investments in other parts of Tecoluca. Three storage silos sit empty near the road passing the village of Santa Monica, and the cattle feed complex sits idle in the nearby village of Las Pampas – both highly visible examples of poorly designed productive infrastructure projects that hastened the decline of FEDECOOPADES in the region. The silos were constructed below the minimum elevation to prevent moisture and keep grains dry. In addition the lack of credit or cooperative supply commitments have conspired to ensure the silos sit empty. The collapse in beef prices in the mid-1990s contributed to heavy losses in livestock projects and triggered a decision to liquidate investments in cattle. Cooperative promoters for FEDECOOPADES blame mismanagement of cooperative funds by coop board

⁸³¹ CORDES (1998); CORDES General Assembly Feb. 27, 1998

⁸³² Interview, manager Social Financial System (SFS), San Carlos Lempa, Tecoluca; CRECER report on SFS (1998). Upon restructuring the debt, forgiving about \$1 million, delinquency rates have improved but credit restrictions have excluded many previous borrowers. Some 37% of the current 700 members of the newly reconstituted savings and loan cooperative, 37% are women. Escobar and Zepeda (2003: 405-6) cited in Cummings (2005).

members, lack of member skills and market forces, while cooperative leaders criticize the poor technical advice, inconsistent oversight and adaptive capacity of FEDECOOPADES.⁸³³

Demobilization revealed a deep crisis in the cooperative production model, to which local producers and NGOs have struggled to find an appropriate alternative that avoids the pitfalls of individualism and risk aversion. Cooperative members in Tecoluca were estimated at close to 2,000 in the early 1990s, but have fallen dramatically. FEDECOOPADES promoters declined from over 100 in 1992, including 50 in the paracentral zone, to only 22 in 1998.⁸³⁴ A shift from large cooperatives to family based production units has vastly reduced the formally organized productive sector. FEDECOOPADES was perceived by some to have initially imposed a cooperative model and was then reluctant to change.⁸³⁵ An INGO representative in the region gives three reasons for the demise of the traditional cooperative model in Tecoluca: failure to adequately provide for the titling of individual plots, inability to achieve planned economic targets, and drift by gremios such as FEDECOOPADES into other areas of assistance that weakened the primary goal of cooperative strengthening. For all three reasons, “the essence of the cooperative model was being lost.”⁸³⁶

ISTA has been widely accused of pressuring cooperatives to subdivide and sell off land to pay the agrarian debt. Performance of the agrarian reform cooperatives has been less effective than those organizations that introduced more flexible organizational models. Of the few remaining ISTA cooperatives, only four operated under collective forms by 1997. The others were subdivided and titled to 650 individual members, and in some instances a portion was sold to pay off debt.⁸³⁷

⁸³³ Interviews, Santos Ramirez, May 6, 1998, FEDECOOPADES promoter, Santa Monica, Feb. 25, 1999; Las Pampas; Nelson Escobar, SHARE Foundation; Elmer, FEDECOOPADES; Emilio Espín, CORDES,

⁸³⁴ Interview, Miguel Mejía, FEDECOOPADES, San Salvador, Mar. 1, 1999.

⁸³⁵ The FEDECOOPADES model stressed centralized decision making, forced collectivization of members' labor, and a refusal to permit individual property.

⁸³⁶ Interview Nelson Escobar May 6, 1998; Elmer, representative for FEDECOOPADES in Tecoluca since the late 1980s, argues that catastrophic decline in terms of trade for beef, largely affected by one large ranch owner that sold enough beef to drive down the price. He adds that FEDECOOPADES helped avoid the most severe losses by selling cattle and then pulling out of many communities in Tecoluca.

⁸³⁷ Molina (1999:108) The subdivided cooperatives include: Santa Teresa, San Ramon Grifal, Las Pampas, Tehuacan, Lotes los 45, San Nicolás, and San Jeronimo.

As an alternative to large cooperatives, CORDES and other NGOs have formed smaller productive units (UDPs) consisting of 10 to 15 PTT families that possess individual property titles, but work some portion of their land collectively. Part of a family plot is dedicated to subsistence food production and farmed individually, while another part is dedicated to collective activities (mostly traditional export crops, cattle or vegetables). Total land farmed collectively in a UDP may reach 20 to 40 hectares.

Other factors that have hampered efforts to foster alternative crop production include the inadequate expertise and lack of sensitivity among NGO agronomists, the impact of natural disasters and the profound distrust among the producers. Some have questioned whether the professionalism of NGOs has come at the expense of sidestepping communal values. The preparation that was required to become an FMLN combatant has not been replicated for training NGO staff. In a detailed survey of six resettled Tecoluca villages in the 1996, Fogaroli and Stowell (1997) find that differences in the expectations for participating in development interventions, particularly among the younger promoters and producers has contributed to the erosion of solidarity that was inherited from the war. As one of the NGOs most committed to structural change, CORDES has yet to acquire sufficient reciprocal trust from producers in the region to ensure a product supply that will in turn enable economies of scale for its processing and commercialization businesses.⁸³⁸

A related criticism involves the risk of NGOs displacing gremios. While CORDES' efficiency has impressed its donors and leveraged resources for the region, it has contrasted sharply with the decision making pace of most gremios and community organizations causing friction when CORDES was leading processes in which it should have been following the initiative from below. Critics allege that CORDES was usurping the authority of those it claimed to serve.⁸³⁹

⁸³⁸ Interviews, Luis Erazo, Martin Melendez, CORDES agronomists, and various producers. Cummings (2005: 135-139). Some rationales given for this lack of success in commercialization include technical questions of crop suitability to the region, adequate funding to pre-purchase stock of production, low discipline or other obstacles (theft, credit) affecting individual producers.

⁸³⁹ Many interviews concentrated their praise or contempt for CORDES on the actions of the regional director, a Spanish émigré and ex-FMLN combatant, Emilio Espín, whose frenetic planning capacity both bewildered many local leaders and was considerably influential in the strides that CORDES and Tecoluca had taken in the past decade. On balance, the attribution of all responsibility for the successes or failures of CORDES in the paracentral region on Espín seemed unwarranted.

Although a number of national gremios have had a strong presence in Tecoluca, the effective role of these organizations has become less clear over time. While CRIPDES was instrumental in having achieved heroic protections for the repopulated communities during the war and the first years of the post-war period, the organization has failed to shift to a new, equally needed accompaniment role in the post-war period. CRIPDES was expected to continue to invest in community organizing, while CORDES would specialize in support for agricultural producers and incubation of local businesses. In practice, CORDES has drifted into both areas, and CRIPDES has attempted to execute projects, losing its value added in the process.⁸⁴⁰ By late 1990s, CRIPDES had essentially lost its orientation in the paracentral region, ceding almost all protagonism to CORDES. These gremios are faulted by many for discarding their responsibility in leading the communal organizing process in ways that give communities a stronger voice in local and national decision making processes.

The research by FUNDE (1997) and others point not to a lack of organization but to the lack of coordination among the many development initiatives, erecting layer upon layer of an elaborate organizational structure well beyond the point of diminishing returns. Communities struggling to sort out and adapt the legacy of wartime organization have been paralyzed by overdeveloped, duplicative structures that exceed local capacity to make them work. As one analyst put, “Tecoluca is all brain, and no legs.”⁸⁴¹ Coordination has since become a higher priority.

One of the earliest decisions in 1988 to coordinate was by decision by CORDES, FEDECOOPADES and FUNPROCOOP – the three most visible development NGOs, to focus their respective work in the south, central and volcano sections of Tecoluca. This decision, which involved significant reallocation of resources intended to reduce overlap and expand coverage, was one of the first in a series of steps to coordinate development actions in

⁸⁴⁰ CRIPDES San Vicente has coordinated local youth sports programs, literacy circles for women, assistance with legalization of community organization, and training of leaders. However, in the view of many, the historical social and political organizing work that CRIPDES has performed in the past has stalled.

⁸⁴¹ Interview, Ana Eugenia Marín, Intermon-Oxfam, San Salvador, March 10, 1998.

Tecoluca.⁸⁴² In effect, these decisions were taken with no local consultation and represent hierarchy solution to a local collective action problem.

To compensate for the local realignment between NGOs, gremios and communities, CORDES and other NGOs have combined insider and outsider advocacy strategies to lobby development issues relevant to the region. Again, CORDES has crossed traditional political lines to pursue vertical strategic alliances (both financial and strategic) with centrist INGOs, bilateral donor agencies, the IDB, and government officials from the governing party. In the lower Lempa valley of Tecoluca CORDES became the de facto government, often to the chagrin of the mayor and municipal council. Despite constant demands, ministerial presence was spotty and improved only after years of lobbying. With respect to USAID, CORDES overcame mutual suspicions between the agency and FMLN producers in the lower Lempa valley to broker financial support for organic cashew and vegetable production and the paving of the main feeder road.

FUSADES highlighted the 22km road in Tecoluca (connecting San Nicolás Lempa to the village of La Pita on the coast) among the 3,000 km high priority rural roads in a 1996 study. Improvement of this road was determined by the World Bank to have tremendous potential returns for nominal investments to pave it.⁸⁴³ Yet nearly six years of intensive lobbying by CORDES, the Tecoluca municipal government and other local organizations was necessary before the government finally authorized this and other feeder roads in the Bajo Lempa to be paved.

When insider strategies stall, CORDES, CRIPDES and the local organizations in Tecoluca easily shift to outsider strategies. An international NGO representative described a visit in the early 1990s by a USAID official to Santa Marta, an FMLN community in the Lempa valley, staged in coordination with local organizations to drive home the area's vulnerability to flooding and the need for infrastructure investments.

⁸⁴² The decision forced FEDECOOPADES, literally a cooperative federation rather than an NGO, to cede cooperatives in the south to CORDES, which it was initially not inclined to do. Interview, Emilio Espín, Dec. 11, 1998.

⁸⁴³ For a series of roads in the Bajo Lempa, including the road to La Pita, the World Bank (1998: 27, citing a FUSADES 1996 study) estimate of an internal rate of return of as much as 523% for an investment of \$7.5 million. Two thirds of the San Nicolás – La Pita road was eventually paved with funding from USAID for a cost of about \$2 million. The expected benefits estimated on average in priority areas suggested an increase of 7% in agricultural production, derived primarily from facilitating the intensification of agriculture.

The visit was intentionally scheduled during the rainy season and the vehicle got stuck in the mud filled access road several times before arriving to greet a large crowd that had turned out. Upon opening the meeting to questions, one man raised his hand, “*Senorón*,” he began, “we fought hard to win this land, but we know that the land alone is not enough. When we started, we didn’t have anything, only slingshots. But little by little, we began accumulating arms, and just as easily we can begin again the same way if our situation doesn’t improve.” After a nervous few moments, the tension passed, but a credible threat had been issued. The point was taken and while not achieving full commitment, the encounter led to USAID opening space for negotiating demands for new investments in crops and infrastructure that hadn’t existed before. CORDES and other NGOs have helped Tecoluca reciprocate by filling this space with solid proposals and when necessary, additional pressure.⁸⁴⁴ According to its regional director, CORDES San Vicente “broke the mold of doing business with USAID, by getting the money without having to abandon our development principles.”⁸⁴⁵

Land subdivision is another area where contentious and pragmatic collective action have converged. In 1997, proindiviso properties were legally eligible for individual titling and a tremendous demand for alternatives had accumulated. Delays in land titling have increased land insecurity and inhibited coordination and investment among producers. At the same time, by breaking proindiviso, property owners had to decide on parcelization plans that would facilitate individual or cooperative economic activities. The high level of local organization in Tecoluca influenced the decision by USAID to pilot Proseguir, a novel titling initiative, in the Bajo Lempa. FMLN PTT beneficiaries in Tecoluca avoided the worst pitfalls of the post-war PTT program after forcibly occupying the lands that were eventually titled to them. With the assistance of FUNDESA, another NGO that was founded by FMLN ex-combatants, Tecoluca became a model for community decision making over how to dissolve pro-indiviso without abandoning cooperative options. Where local organization exists, titling patterns opted for models that did not rule out collective property use (natural reserves, social property, common productive land, joint housing areas).

⁸⁴⁴ Interview, Nelson Escobar, SHARE Foundation, San Salvador, Feb. 10, 2000.

⁸⁴⁵ Interview, Emilio Espín, Dec. 11, 1998

In contrast, many other potential beneficiaries (including most ex-members of the Armed Forces) were assigned land or were dependent upon a flawed land market to find it, which often resulted in plots that were of poor quality and far away from their homes. Where local organization was weak or rigidly opposed to parcelization (as in the case of FEDECOOPADES), titling involved costly delays or led to a matrix of independent homesteads with each house positioned in one corner and as far from the neighbor as possible.⁸⁴⁶

Despite the evident flaws, significant differences set the economic development initiatives in Tecoluca apart from other rural towns. The noted setbacks are relatively modest by comparison to most rural municipalities, and have so far failed to dampen the optimism of most in Tecoluca, where the post-war expectations may be moderated but not diminished. Rather than derailing communal participation or polarizing local competition, criticism of local leaders, particularly in the area of economic development has served to revise strategy and influence corrective measures. The vertical command structure during the war left little room for deep criticism. Lichbach argues that dissident groups are almost always opposed to internal dissent. Indeed, grave episodes of internal repression have suggested that this was indeed the case. Intolerance, according to Brinton (1965: 194) is the hallmark of all Great Revolutions. The more violent or intense is a conflict, the more conflict leads to the suppression of dissent and within each conflict party as well as forced conformity to norms and values” Turner (1986:174).

While there is some evidence that supports this argument for national level politics within the FMLN as the local level, FMLN insurgents in Tecoluca have somehow avoided this destiny of intolerance. In post-war period, an ex-commander can give one opinion and an ordinary peasant can stand up and voice a very different opinion. Both views are considered as legitimate. Military leaders are nervous about losing prestige and sometimes act to preserve power, even when that power is not in the community interest. Yet, few are spared from this vibrant debate and new mechanisms exist to monitor and sanction poor leadership. There is little doubt that all of these fundamental governance questions are openly debated and no one fears offering their opinion. Whether healthy for democracy or not, many in Tecoluca feel empowered to criticize.

⁸⁴⁶ Interview, Antonio Alvarez, Fundesa, Feb. 9, 2000. Proseguir contracted with Fundesa and two other organizations to title 16,000 individual plots by late 2000. The process involved 25 steps, with 5 models for breaking up proindiviso property, and participatory methods for selecting preferences. Alvarez argued that the most popular one was the individual homestead model

In practice, the actual performance of CORDES and the municipal government has steered between the denunciations of critics or the praise of advocates. Without a template for success, contradictory advice has deepened a tension between the expectations of certain donors and the PTT communities. CORDES was advised by USAID and other donors to abandon all forms of cooperativism and adopt business principles by slashing payroll costs and delinquent borrowers. In contrast, CORDES was criticized by local agrarian leaders for reducing subsidies and embracing market discipline when local producers were not ready to compete. CORDES was advised that economic goals had been undermined by unnecessary social investment, while popular education organizations criticized CORDES for investing too little in producer education as a means for greater accountability. These frictions highlight the conflict between technical and participatory expectations for NGOs that remain a work in progress.

The proactive presence of Tecolucans in many national and regional post-war advocacy campaigns reveals a refusal to lose sight of the structural obstacles to local problems and the capacity to overcome local challenges to mounting these larger collective actions. The environment is one of these emerging postwar battlefields. One farmer described the transformation of his community in terms that are common to many Tecolucan communities and highlights the accumulated experience in confronting encroachment on hard earned property rights. His community of El Socorro was one of many Tecolucan communities that protested to pressure the Jiboa Mill to stop dumping its refuse into a local stream that had poisoned land and animals – a practice that had endured for years:

Before the war, some of the best paid work was clearing forest for cotton, for example in the Hacienda Nancuchiname [in nearby Jiquilisco]. The people were removed and the trees were brought down in such a rush that the owner, Archie Baldochi, had us simply bury them. After three years, it was done. The trees were gone. Then things turned bad, cotton came and land for corn disappeared and we then had to go to the hacienda to work. We were treated like animals by the farm foremen, who were corrupted by the owners. The foremen said “do this” and we had to do it, because they owned everything. Before, you could not say, ‘Look, I’m not going to work for them because they treat us poorly.’ It was prohibited, saying it amounted to defrauding the hacienda, and so it was that one simply had to put up with it. But it became too much, people got tired over so many years, and began to explore, to discover new things.

Before, the people were easy to fool. You’re not going to believe it, but even now we have to move forward or we are going to wind up how we were before. Even with the right to vote, you were still screwed and we don’t want to return to the old days when the business was able to do what it wanted, the businessman was maladjusted to getting what he wanted and nothing happened because the businessman had money. When he saw you, the poor, voting in mass, he threw you in jail because you are poor. The rich were untouchable and this was the law.

But things have changed, these days, for example, not only do people rise up but this little community right here goes right up to shout our demands to the big boss (*propio vergón*). Now people are fed up and tired of so many abuses. When the sugar mill dumped their waste water into our river, we went to take the mill. When the Rio Bravo became dirty and killed our animals and crops, community leaders organized and surrounded the sugar mill. Some of the men entered the mill and threatened to burn it down if our demands weren't heard. In no time, each affected farmer had received a payment, and the mill stopped dumping the waste in the river. We knew that there was an environmental law, and if we didn't do something things were going to go back to how they were – the businessman accustomed to doing what he wanted, and the poor peasant who complains is taken prisoner. Now that the people are able, the rich are not untouchable.⁸⁴⁷

Tecoluca's mobilization capacity, exercised as a last resort and often embedded within a profound sense of legal and juridical rights, has blocked the political capture of hard won land rights and associated development resources. However, even the sophisticated advocacy strategies in Tecoluca have been insufficient in fending off all cases of political capture. Organizations representing the people living in the lower Lempa flood plain have written letters to government and IFI officials, had their views published in local papers, marched in front of government offices, blocked roads and lobbied tirelessly since 1994 for flood control infrastructure, beginning with a network of levees, drainage canals and raised shelters.⁸⁴⁸ After Hurricane Mitch revealed again in 1998 the region's vulnerability, the IDB began preparing a small \$10 million loan that would redress local demands for investments in flood control, irrigation and sustainable development. The Bank even took the rather unprecedented step of approving three technical cooperation grants beginning in late 1999 for a total of \$650,000 for the purpose of strengthening local organizational capacity and initiating consultations on the design of this plan.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁷ Don Eliseo, El Socorro, Tecoluca, April 22, 1998; Contamination by the mill washing sugar residue in the rivers was a constant problem, but became intolerable when farmers from at least three villages in Tecoluca lost animals and crops. El Socorro lost 9 cows and 7 hectares of marigolds, and an irrigation pump. As several hundred peasants blocked the mill entrance, a trailer grazed one elderly protester. The demonstration threatened violence until a negotiating delegation sent by the mayor won some concessions. Indemnification was paid by the mill to each community (although below demanded amounts) and contamination stopped. Interview, Juan de Jesus Gavidia Belloso, Nueva Tehuacán, Aug. 29, 1998.

⁸⁴⁸ Irrigation officials at MAG that were involved in the design of the Bajo Lempa Irrigation District in the 1970s have suggested that the pre-war private landowners who cultivated most of the flood plain were much less susceptible to flooding because they were able to maintain a drainage system, largely with the cheap labor.

⁸⁴⁹ With Japanese Cooperation (JICA) funding, partial construction of the levees began in 2001 and local communities formed an oversight and advocacy committee to monitor the process and push for completion of entire proposed system.



Figure 8.5 Classroom in San Bartolo, Tecoluca after showing the flood tide after Hurricane Mitch

However, after nearly five years of stringing the Bajo Lempa communities along and with the levees unfinished, the loan was unceremoniously cancelled by the outgoing Flores administration in 2004. Despite considerable prodding by the environmental specialists within the IDB, the Salvadoran government reportedly blocked the loan to avoid benefiting an

opposition region - although not on technical grounds but on political ones.⁸⁵⁰ Just months prior to a 2005 storm that flooded the Bajo Lempa for the sixth time since 1992, a loan manager for the IDB stated her disappointment with the Salvadoran government's decision on the Bajo Lempa loan:

This is a good example of a loan where the Bank invested a relatively large amount of grant resources to prepare and involve local communities in the development of the loan, but also more important, in the articulation of a locally-driven strategy for development. I've always thought,...,that this had the potential for an innovative poverty-targeted loan. It's never been completely clear to me, given the small size of the loan, why it never obtained more support from the government.⁸⁵¹

The redistribution of land and economic power has by no means eliminated inequality in Tecoluca. Still, the possibility for elite political capture of local public goods has been dramatically reduced. Yet other forms of inequality are emerging at the individual level related to income and basic needs, employment opportunities, gender, disability, and between communities in terms of levels of organization, internal cohesion, institutional support, and funding distribution rules. Equally contentious disputes have involved the misuse or theft of community project funding, representing a new mode of political capture. Common are the complaints that ex-commanders have become *acomodados* and contribute less than their fair share to communal development goals. The more isolated, poorest and ideologically conservative communities resent the perceived surplus of financial investment in communities in the lower Lempa valley or those communities more ideologically aligned with the FMLN mayor.

Finally, Tecoluca has not been immune to the divisions within the FMLN. Nicolás García and Carlos Cortés were both aligned with the moderate and orthodox factions within the FMLN. Unlike other FMLN municipalities, this competition within the municipal council did not have a significant effect on the continuity of FMLN governance nor the related consultative and planning mechanisms that are often dependent upon a particular mayor.⁸⁵² The greater

⁸⁵⁰ Interview, IDB official, El Salvador Country Office, Feb. 2002.

⁸⁵¹ Correspondence, Michele Lemay, IDB Bajo Lempa loan manager. June 24, 2005, IDB (2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001d)

⁸⁵² These same divisions in neighboring Jiquilisco and several other major cities led to the FMLN loss in these towns in 2000 and in subsequent elections. See chapter nine for further discussion of local politics

expansion of access to party decision making for lower level elites, such as mayors, council members, NGOs and gremio leaders, has diffused a sense of selectivity that has triggered the level of discontent and defections within ARENA. While loyalties have been challenged at the national level and two FMLN deputies from San Vicente are among the ranks of those in dispute with the party's orthodox faction, the process has resulted in strengthening democratic decision making processes within the party at the local level. FMLN candidates have won by consistently lopsided margins in local elections. Competition between the "*renovadores*" and "*ortodoxos*" has increased participation in local political and decision making processes rather than diminished it.

The link between land and elite power was broken in Tecoluca, opening up new challenges to post-war development but freeing people to devote more energy to resolving them. What FMLN leaders lacked in formal skills, they excelled at in terms of practical problem solving and political instinct. Tecolucans enjoy a higher level of self-confidence that is absent in most peasant communities and act with determination to transform the pattern of rural underdevelopment in resettled ex-combatant communities. New forms of inequality have cropped up and efforts to develop a solidary local economy coexist with individualist attitudes and a political economic environment that is hostile to small scale agriculture. What distinguishes Tecoluca is the capacity for contentious collective action that has not only eliminated one form of local political capture, but remains rooted in community values and focused on structural targets rather than the imposition of hierarchical leadership or the suppression of open, constructive criticism. These factors have kept revolutionary principles front and center in the debate over post-war development and have restrained local leaders from becoming the new "*patrono endiosado*." Local institutions responsive to these expectations have taken important strides in demonstrating possible development alternatives, but they have also emphasized and have invested in structural change. These communal checks and balances have combined with the expansion of political opportunity for emerging local elites to short circuit the breakdown of the utopian expectations.

D. COUNTER-INSURGENT REFORM, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND SAN ILDEFONSO

The political experience of **San Ildefonso** as contested territory between insurgent and counter-insurgent forces during the war left an imprint of ambivalence regarding post-war loyalties and uncertainty in seizing political opportunity. This ambivalence is rooted in the partial transformation of the local agrarian structure. A combined reservoir of good will toward some provincial landowners and a thin allegiance to the FMLN contributed to hesitation in occupying or even claiming potential PTT land, which resulted in less than a third of all originally claimed land being distributed. In all, 377 persons in San Ildefonso received 1,625 hectares of land through the PTT program, or 12.5 % of the town's agricultural labor force.⁸⁵³ Fifty demobilized Armed Forces and another 50 tenedores were settled near the town center. Most if not all of the PTT land was allocated through land market transactions rather than occupations by beneficiaries, and in turn many highland beneficiaries have land in lowland areas (Lajas).

According to the 1971 Agrarian Census, San Ildefonso had 939 farms, two thirds of which were small rental properties (ave. 1.2 hectares) growing subsistence grains. Together, the 1980 land reform and 1992 PTT converted about 10 large farms into 1,500 new small farms (5 hectares). Although most of these new smallholders continue to grow basic grains, this shift represents a significant decline in renting or sharecropping tenure arrangements and agrarian inequality in general. However, the land transfer was limited to the western highland half of the municipality, leaving many medium sized landowners located to the east of the main road unaffected. Subsistence renting on about half of the highlands farms was converted into land ownership.

The post-war agrarian structure of San Ildefonso is a jumble of PTT, private and cooperative properties. On PTT and ISTA cooperatives in San Ildefonso, which represented the most promising base for social transformation in the municipality, producer organizations were in various stages of disarray. After almost two decades since land had been turned over to them and several years of post-war assistance, many of these cooperatives were without a title to their land and relatively abandoned in ongoing reconstruction efforts. Molina (1999: 89) characterizes some in the reform sector as beneficiaries that were never interested in becoming independent

⁸⁵³ This includes 515 ha and 70 members of the Cooperative Los Almendros, which was transferred from ISTA to PTT.

farmers. Some farmers received land not because they fought for it, but because they just happened to be working as laborers in large farms when the land reform law was passed. Those acquiring land in such ways may hold less clear preferences regarding the assumption of risks involved in cooperative enterprises, preferring the security and predictability of a wage. Many within the San Ildefonso PTT and reform cooperative sector might be described this way.

San Pablo Canales consisted of two separate properties, one located near the cantón and the other (**Sihuatepeque**) several kilometers to the east. San Pablo Canales, an admired and hated hacienda that before the war supported 1,000 head of cattle, included 250 milk cows, and a *colono* population of over 100 people was subdivided in 1994 after collective activity by ISTA supported cooperative members had long since ended. The process favored some cooperative members over others and has contributed to a reconcentration of land.⁸⁵⁴ In 1998, collective activity had long since ended and most were working without external technical assistance or credit, preferring not to risk losing their land.

Sihuatepeque had by 1999 resisted ISTA pressure to pay off remaining debt in order to acquire land title. ISTA argued that the cooperative agreed to debt forgiveness under Decree 719, which forgave individual debt below \$1,900, parcelized the property, and scheduled 30% of the balance to be paid in full. The cooperative has 320 hectares and 48 members. The average farm size is 6.7 ha. The original owner was paid the equivalent of \$75 per hectare in indemnification. Cooperative leaders argue that there is no remaining debt, because at this value total individual debt would be less than \$500, well below the \$1,900 threshold. ISTA has asserted that a new value for the land leaves a balance of up to \$500 for some members, which has not been paid.⁸⁵⁵ Cooperative members do not have even this modest amount and have

⁸⁵⁴ Marchand (1996) suggests that the cooperative disintegration process began in the early 1980s when the cooperative was decapitalized and some members acquired more than others.

⁸⁵⁵ Interview, Ing. Rolando García, ISTA, San Vicente, July 20, 1998.

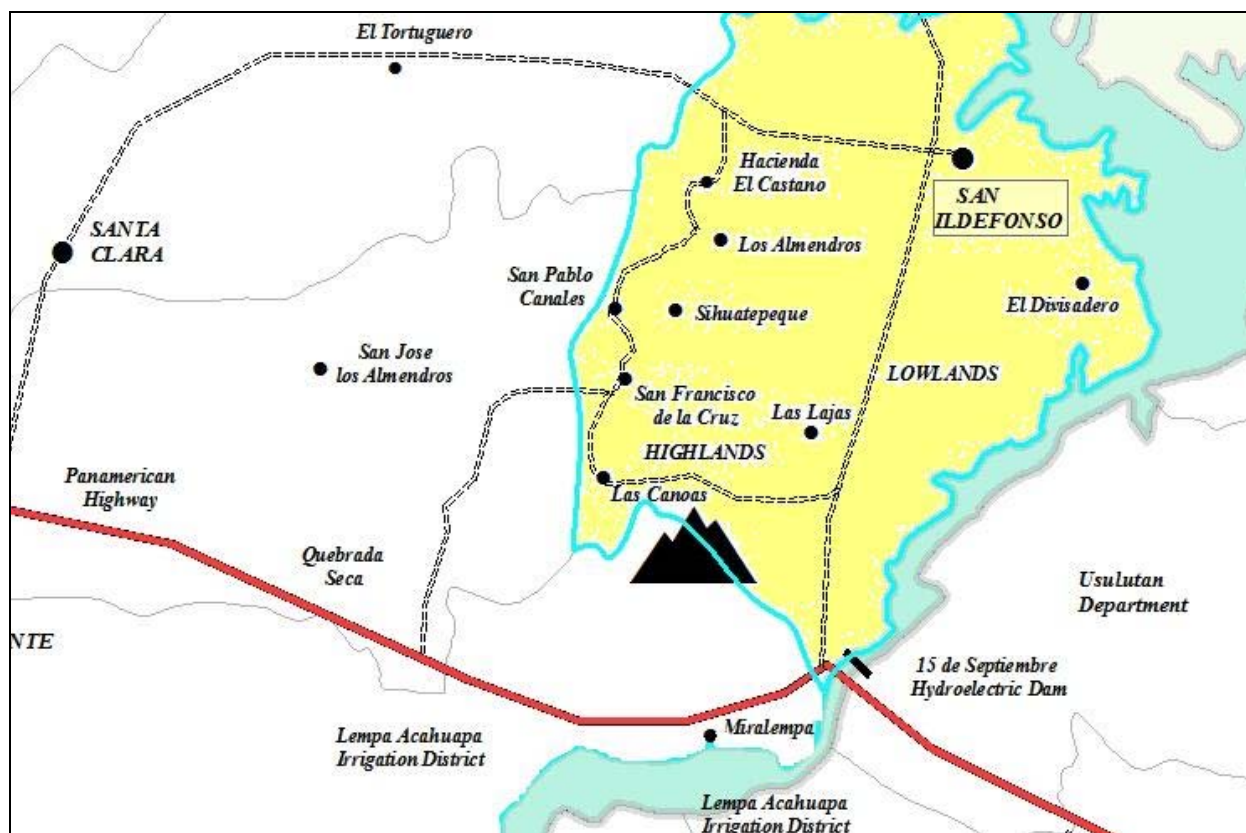


Figure 8.6 Map of San Ildefonso & Northern San Vicente

insisted that ISTA is providing contradictory and misleading information to justify the debt, which was perceived by many as a bribe.⁸⁵⁶

Los Almendros passed from ISTA to PTT after former *colonos* and demobilized FMLN militia occupied the farm. Several members of the Almendros cooperative also represent the Regional Peasant Organization of Northern San Vicente (ORC) in San Ildefonso, which began in 1987 under the PRTC and supported land struggles in northern San Vicente.⁸⁵⁷ Fewer than half of the 70 land beneficiaries occupy their land in los Almendros, but the cooperative has received support from several NGOs in reforestation, production and social infrastructure projects. Other

⁸⁵⁶ Interview Juan Martínez, Siuatepeque, President Cooperative La Carbonera; Leonardo Martínez, El Sitio, San Ildefonso, July 16, 1998. ISTA and FINATA both are widely known to be associated with corruption in the administration of the agrarian reform. During this period corruption and fraud have been rampant involving current and ex-employees of both institutions offering false advice regarding parcelization requirements to qualify for debt forgiveness.

⁸⁵⁷ The ORC emerged in the late 1980s to represent 16 communities and approximately 1,000 peasant farmers in Santa Clara, San Esteban Catarina and San Ildefonso.

neighboring PTT communities, including San Francisco de la Cruz and Las Canoas, both of which were transferred from FINATA, share the same perception of institutional neglect.

ASDI, the principal development NGO in Northern San Vicente, has provided credit, technical assistance, commercialization and organizational training to about 70 families in 9 highland communities in San Ildefonso.⁸⁵⁸ Given the relatively poor soils in much of the region and the general lack of attention by other extension agencies, ASDI's assistance to small producers was crucial. Post-war support to as many as 680 producers has hewed more than the other two case study municipalities toward modest diversification beyond basic grains, improvement of livestock, organic techniques and organizational training.⁸⁵⁹ In 1997, the credit program was legalized into a savings and loan association, although half of the original borrowers that were delinquent were not initially included. With an office in neighboring Santa Clara and San Vicente, ASDI technicians commute to the region from San Salvador and other towns. Accompaniment of the FMLN communities began during the war and faced many of the noted challenges of supporting small scale agriculture and rural employment in the post-war period. Unlike CORDES, little had been achieved by 1999 in terms of agroindustry.

However, despite many similarities with CORDES in Tecoluca, the relations between ASDI and peasant gremios turned sour. The eventual split between ASDI and its historic base in northern San Vicente began in the mid-1990s with the organization's rigidity on debt forgiveness and inconsistency in support of the area's producers. The program objective of strengthening peasant gremios, and thereby reducing the role of ASDI as intermediary, was a stated condition of EU funding.⁸⁶⁰ Yet, ORC leaders in communities such as Los Almendros expressed criticism of the inconsistency in post-war support of ASDI and other NGOs.

Highland PTT community expectations for support from municipal authority were also frustrated. In 1997 after over a decade of Christian Democrat control over local government, Maria Julia Costanza won the mayoral election as an ARENA candidate.⁸⁶¹ A former DIDECO

⁸⁵⁸ ASDI was formed in 1987 by the PRTC, has worked in northern San Vicente since 1989, as well as four other departments, including southern and northern Usulután.

⁸⁵⁹ Interview, Orlando Mancía, Roni Hidalgo, Agronomist, ASDI Santa Clara, March 10, 1999

⁸⁶⁰ Interview, Hector Fuentes, Regional Director, ASDI, San Vicente, March 20, 1998

⁸⁶¹ At 29, Costanza became the youngest elected mayor in the country.

promoter for ARENA, Costanza was well-known and generally liked by many in the rural communities. However, her first term as mayor was plagued with allegations of incompetence and intolerance toward opposition. In March, 1998, three of the town's four councilpersons representing highland communities and the secretary resigned over alleged misuse of municipal funds. Costanza closed ranks by replacing them with loyal colleagues from lowland communities, including a CNC organizer and member of Arevalo's Miralempa cooperative.

An effort was made in 1997 to approach the mayor of San Ildefonso by representatives of FMLN gremios conducting a development needs assessment in northern San Vicente. In October 1997, ORC and ASDI arranged a meeting with Costanza to present the results of the study and explore how to involve San Ildefonso in the coordination of recommended follow-up actions. In the meeting, the mayor reportedly refused the invitation to participate in any of the proposed inter-municipal actions. Costanza viewed the study as a disguised FMLN effort to undermine the work of an ARENA mayor and stated that she needed no one else's analysis of her community's needs.⁸⁶²

Costanza's political support derives from lowland communities and the urban town center, which now represent 66% and 25% of the municipal population, respectively. At least ten farms over 200 hectares in lowland communities and owned by prominent families in San Ildefonso were identified by an early 1992 FMLN property registry but ultimately not affected by the PTT. The survival of these provincial landowners, many of whom now live in the town center, has depended on electoral reciprocity with departmental politicians (Arevalo and Amado Aguilúz) and influence in the municipal council. The introduction of basic services, the paving the main access road and improvements in the town center, have in turn received higher prioritization from local and state funding sources. One half of the lowlands area farmers are small subsistence renters (less than 1 hectare) and complain about the deteriorating social contract with local owners and vote buying during elections, but are unorganized and unwilling to challenge the status quo.⁸⁶³

⁸⁶² Interview, Rosaelia Hernandez, ASDEC and Nohemi Portillo, ORC/CDD, San Vicente, 5.18.98. Portillo was present at the meeting with Costanza.

⁸⁶³ Interviews with farmers in the lowlands villages of Cumiste, Palmeras, Ahogadas, Mariadiga and Divisadero, May 1998.

The influence of Father Macias of San Esteben Catarina and the catequists that emanated throughout the parish of northern San Vicente is still recognized as one of the principal influences of revolutionary organizing in the region, although less in San Ildefonso. The post-war church in the San Ildefonso, as in other northern municipalities, is defensive and a relatively insignificant institution in local politics. In one municipal exercise to prioritize local problems, the lack of attention to spiritual aspects of local issues was ranked by community leaders on a par with lack of credit, basic services, organizational weakness and delinquency (FUSAI 1996: 17). Evangelical churches have made strong inroads in urban neighborhoods and rural villages that are unattended by the local Catholic priest and competition between Catholics and Evangelical protestants is the overarching dynamic in church relations with local people. On the anniversary mass of Macias's execution, the priest (Father René) in San Esteben Catarina was reported to have warned parishioners of the dangers of political involvement.⁸⁶⁴

The lack of any unified reconstruction effort in San Ildefonso only became worse with the prospect of a \$20 million, four year department wide development program for San Vicente, which has exacerbated tensions between gremios, NGOs, the government and the FMLN. *San Vicente Productivo* emerged in late 1995, sponsored by European Community and modeled after a similar program in neighboring Usulután.⁸⁶⁵ Initial consultation by EU representatives were with NGOs (ASDI, CORDES, FUNPROCOOP, FEDECOOPADES, and ASDEC), in the name of 60 departmental communities of some 4,100 PTT beneficiaries (both FMLN and 600 FAES).⁸⁶⁶ The five NGOs and cooperative confederations created the Convergence for the Development of San Vicente Communities (CDD) to campaign for the program, which required government approval and co-direction.

⁸⁶⁴ Interview, Chaca, PRTC ex-commander, San Salvador, March 16, 1998

⁸⁶⁵ The SV Productivo program was modeled after the EU ALA I & II Program in Usulután (1993-1999). EU ALA was created independently of the PRN, representing the level of distrust that European donors held for the National Reconstruction Secretariat and government Ministries in general to provide the necessary services to the demobilized ex-combatant population. As an alternative, the EU established a \$20 million program of integrated development for communities of demobilized combatants in one department - Usulután. The all encompassing program would address land titling, production training and credit, education, health and basic infrastructure needs of a target population of 2,100. In effect, the EU ALA program replaced the central government for Usulután. (Murray 1995).

⁸⁶⁶ Its not clear why only 600 Armed Forces beneficiaries of the PTT were included.

Disagreement between ASDI and ORC within the CDD began in 1997, when the advisory committee of NGOs was perceived as monopolizing the steering committee's administrative role defined by the EU contract. CDD autonomy in the definition and prioritization of projects was a constant source of tension.⁸⁶⁷ The ORC and other gremios directly representing PTT producers demanded greater control over the funds designated for training community leaders, which would have initially been channeled through ASDI. ASDI refused, and ORC in turn, refused to sign the accord. "They treat us as if we are infants," complained one ORC leader, "swinging us in the hammock, when in fact we are grown and can speak for ourselves." In Dec. 1997, a CDD assembly decided that the gremios would take the decisions, and the NGOs would act as an advisory council, without voting rights. NGOs would propose technical projects and the CDD would set priorities.

As the division between the ORC and ASDI deepened, the CDD members of northern San Vicente barred ASDI from being the primary bidding agent in any projects that would be administered in that sub-region.⁸⁶⁸ With the prospect of losing out on the SVP funding as well as access to ORC communities, ASDI became more flexible in adapting its role in the CDD project. An evaluation of ASDI by one of its principal European donors that had funded the NGO's work in northern San Vicente explained their decision to terminate support. "It boiled down to a simple revelation, when we asked them to trim the program to meet available funding, the first thing they cut was community participation. This suggested to us that they had lost touch with the people they claimed to be serving."⁸⁶⁹ By competing with the ORC, ASDI was weakening peasant capacities to advocate and defend their own interests. In contrast to the split between ORC and ASDI, CORDES and SES have become the reference for PTT beneficiaries in southern San Vicente and FUNPROCOOP in the Central region with relatively less debate.

In part, the authority of the CDD was rooted in its mobilization capacity. In 1998 the Salvadoran government was delaying the approval of the EU-government accord to initiate the program. The CDD introduced a letter to the legislative assembly critical of the government minister in charge of negotiations. The letter contributed to the executive's eventual approval of

⁸⁶⁷ Interview, Nohemi Portillo, CDD Coordinator, 4.20.97, San Vicente.

⁸⁶⁸ Interview, Nohemi Portillo, CDD Coordinator, Aug. 24, 1998, San Vicente

⁸⁶⁹ Interview, Eric Marchand, IIZ, December 1998.

the accord, which then went to the legislature for its approval. ARENA continued to delay its approval of the accord in order to extract FMLN support for two multilateral loans sought by the government to finance education and local development.⁸⁷⁰ CDD brought several thousand peasant farmers inside the National Assembly to pressure for legislative approval, which was eventually achieved in June of that year.

While the CDD achieved some success in wresting control of direct negotiations with the government and EU over the San Vicente Productivo contract from the NGOs and placing it in the hands of the beneficiaries themselves, sustaining the movement to shape the program once ratified was a more difficult challenge. A crisis in the ORC leadership within the CDD contributed to its demise in 2000, just as the program was taking off. In the absence of a strong beneficiary organization, San Vicente Productivo under government – EU co-direction, has fallen short of the original expectations by funding mostly infrastructure in San Ildefonso and paying minimal attention to transparent and participatory processes that address the structure inequities of rural development originally envisioned by the CDD.

The fragmented and unsustainable bottom up mobilization effort of the CDD share some similarities with the other major development project that has had some impact on post-war agriculture in San Ildefonso. In 1986, the Christian Democrat government sought from the IDB an \$11 million loan for the construction of the Lempa Acahuapa irrigation district and a program of technical support for water users.⁸⁷¹ Orlando Arevalo remained at the time of project approval one of Duarte's most loyal supporters even as many in the Christian Democrat base, and in Arevalo's own organization (ACOPAI) were shifting toward opposition to the PDC's austerity policies. Arevalo's Miralempa cooperative and part of his San Ildefonso base would directly benefit from the Lempa Acahuapa project, which was initiated during the height of conflict. The decision to proceed with the project suggests both the counter-insurgent underpinnings to which the IDB acquiesced, as well its capture by Arevalo to reward his base in San Vicente. The

⁸⁷⁰ FMLN opposition to the loans was based on the lack of accountability regarding large components of the loans that could be diverted for electoral purposes, but on more wide ranging negotiations with ARENA as well.

⁸⁷¹ The full project costs were \$14.5 million, with \$5.2 million in government counterpart funding, \$650,000 in EU funding and \$2.14 million from JICA. The IDB also provided a \$690,000 technical assistance grant to fund extension services. In addition to almost a \$1 million in fees that accumulated during a decade of project delays, related deficiencies in maintenance and efficient water use will undoubtedly lower the working life of the canal and severely reduce the effective value to Salvadorans for the \$20 million amortized debt.

dismal results underscore how the project's counter-insurgent intent ultimately undermined the medium term benefits, clientelist or not, to the end beneficiary.

The funding to build the Lempa Acahuapa irrigation district was approved in 1986, but by 1998, over a decade after the six year project had begun, only 150 hectares of the 2,500 hectare district were actually being farmed using irrigation.⁸⁷² Several years later, only 730 ha (29%) of the district is being farmed with irrigation, a significant portion of which was dedicated to sugar cane and traditional crops rather than non-traditional crops for which it was intended.⁸⁷³

Lempa Acahuapa became an icon for failed rural development, plagued by three main problems. First, infrastructure completion was delayed for almost ten years by a combination of bidding problems and indifference by the successive ARENA administrations. Second, the plan for the two state agencies, the Agriculture Development Bank (BFA) or CENTA to provide extension, investigation and marketing services to the water users collapsed. As in the case of PRODAP, both agencies declined to provide the service as Ministry of Agriculture employees retreated under the downsizing pressure of IFI institutional reforms.⁸⁷⁴ An emergency grant to expedite the provision of these services was largely unable to redress CENTA indifference, and under pressure from the IDB to spend the money, provided training in 1992, three years before irrigation began flowing.⁸⁷⁵

Third and perhaps most importantly, the water users' organization was divided between a faction on the San Vicente side of the Lempa River loyal to Arevalo and ARENA, and a faction on the Usulután side composed largely of FMLN ex-combatants that contested association

⁸⁷² IDB (1998b) and interview Octavio Duarte, MAG/CENTA, Puente Cuscatlan, San Vicente. May 14, 1998. Only 1,330 hectares had adequate infrastructure for access to irrigation, 236 ha. covered by forest, and a 292 hectare private farm provided its own access infrastructure. Water users had to pay about \$80 for access and plus monthly quota of \$24 per hectare for water usage.

⁸⁷³ UNDP (2003: 219). Only 8% of El Salvador's potentially irrigable land (273,183 ha) was actually under irrigation in 1998 and most of this is underutilized. (Technoserve 1998). Compare Lempa Acahuapa to the other two irrigation districts, Zapotitan – 1,500 ha (47%) of 3,200 hectares farmed under irrigation, and Aticoyo 2730 ha (94%).

⁸⁷⁴ Water user services that were finally provided preceded the actual use of irrigation by several years, diminishing the impact considerably. Additional demonstration plot and extension services were provided through PRODAP as well as through various NGOs working with FMLN ex-combatants on the Usulután side (CRS, IBE, REDES).

⁸⁷⁵ Interview, Ing. Alirio Mendoza, Technoserve, Feb. 18, 1999, San Salvador.

leadership. Inherent organizational weaknesses on both sides have contributed to competition and the debilitation of the water users association as an effective gremio.

Land inequality among water users exacerbates these internal organizational weaknesses and political tensions. The agrarian reform cooperatives, (including Arevalo's Miralempa) originally occupied 75% of the district, but have parcelized their property into small plots. IDB specialists argue that this subdivision is incompatible with the most efficient use of irrigation, raising the costs of access, training and administration of the district (IDB 1998 op cit.: 26). A small number of larger landowners, including an ex-ARENA Minister of Agriculture, Oscar Manuel Gutierrez, own farms over 200 hectares and were the first to have access channels built from the principal water canal to their properties.⁸⁷⁶ One estimation of the distribution of land within the Lempa Acahuapa district showed that 47% of the properties were between 1 and 3 hectares, 20% between 3 and 25 hectares, and 33% (721 ha.) represented farms greater than 25 hectares (CEL 1999: 38).

The resulting lack of unity prevented the beneficiary population from exercising greater pressure or oversight on the IDB, state and international donors that each shared responsibility for the project's disastrous management. According to a Salvadoran irrigation engineer involved with Lempa Acahuapa, the project's most significant oversight was the failure to strengthen the local organization of the water users to hold project manager's accountable:

There was never a coherent entity that could coordinate the interests of the water users and be vigilant against the abuses of the management. They are divided by the river, as well as internally. Most beneficiaries have almost no knowledge of big projects, are not consulted and are therefore distrustful and obstruct the process of implementation. The capacity to promote the project, unifying the affected population, presenting the costs and benefits, always produces better results. The Ministry of Agriculture has no capacity or political will to do this.⁸⁷⁷

When CNC President Orlando Arevalo posed with President Armando Calderon Sol to inaugurate the Lempa Acahuapa district on June 4, 1998, the project was six years behind

⁸⁷⁶ Gutierrez and 30 other landowners in the region sued CEL for damages after the managers at the hydroelectric dam released excessive water prior to Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Gutierrez and family members claimed nearly \$1.5 million in damages to 210 hectares of sugarcane. *La Prensa Gráfica*, Jan. 10, 2001.

⁸⁷⁷ Interview, Abelardo Flores, Ortega and Cia., Jan. 20, 1999, San Salvador.

schedule and \$2.3 million over budget. Calderón Sol recognized Lempa Acahuapa as an embarrassment that would hopefully not be repeated. ARENA's empowerment strategy for rural producer organizations and a policy of abandoning agriculture both destined the project to fail. Yet, Arevalo succeeded in taking both sides of this argument as one of the rural sector's most capable politicians that switches fluidly between insider and outsider roles. Arevalo's CNC claims representation of 200,000 affiliates, organized in 821 cooperatives and 300 ADESCOs.⁸⁷⁸ Despite CNC assertions to have delivered the 1998 debt forgiveness deal, Arevalo negotiated largely behind the scenes and his organization never participated in land occupations or mobilizations. Instead, the CNC turned out 5,000 members to fill an *Escalon* amphitheatre to congratulate Calderón Sol as he left office in April 1999 for fulfilling the bargain he and Arevalo had made there to win the Confederation's electoral support in 1994. Arevalo's astute political skills have ensured a continuous supply of unremarkable state funded rural projects that have done little to alter the decline in economic livelihoods in places like San Ildefonso.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷⁸ CNC Pamphlet. Clearly inflated, these figures have varied considerably in different CNC publications and press statements by Arevalo.

⁸⁷⁹ CNC Annual Report, 1995-1997. The 1997 CNC balance sheet reports nearly \$500,000 in assets, most of which is from one \$300,000 credit in 1996. The CNC employees 250 people, including various family members.



Figure 8.7 Orlando Arevalo (left) with Agricultural Minister and President Calderon Sol (third from left) at June 4, 1998 inauguration of the Lempa Acahuapa irrigation district

CNC patronage has nevertheless solidified a loyal peasant base for several parties, which has legitimated Arevalo's status as a pragmatic dealmaker. He has now brokered elite pacts with three different counter-insurgent political parties. His pragmatism has never conveyed into strategic alliances with the FMLN, but he has at times attempted to emulate their empowerment through conflict strategies. In Oct. 2000, while still a deputy for ARENA, Arevalo led a protest march of ex-civil defense patrollers that blocked government offices. To underscore the crime of openly challenging COENA authority, Arevalo was handcuffed and delivered by the police to the National Assembly in direct violation of his sovereign rights as a legislator. The attempted humiliation backfired and increased his national popularity. In 2001, he switched to the PCN.

Arevalo's signature on the politics of rural development is difficult to classify. From the debacle of Lempa Acahuapa to the cacique style of loyalty that he commands in dirt poor rural

towns, the ultimate reliance on vertical power relations with his base restricts the possible collective action strategies. The inability of ASDI or the CDD to consolidate support in the highland communities of San Ildefonso is in part due to sympathies for the CNC. A cloud of impropriety and opportunism has followed Arevalo throughout his political career and the personalism of his authority has effectively demobilized his followers in terms of autonomous local capacity. He remains the single source of power within the CNC. Deal making has come at the expense of more sustainable rural mobilization that would transcend any single leader.

Arevalo's flexible political identity works well in San Ildefonso, where the antipathy held for opposition NGOs by Costanza's municipal government in San Ildefonso has also proven to be less ideological than opportunist. After ARENA attempted to remove her following another instance of open disobedience with COENA on an FMLN policy proposal, Costanza also switched to PCN has been elected three times since. Supporters of the FMLN, divided somewhat over Christian Democrat or FMLN organizing tactics, have failed so far to capitalize on this political opening.⁸⁸⁰

Like most Fonchanos, particularly those living in the town center, the fear associated with the war was never tempered with any experience of successful collective action linked to FMLN influence only individual survival strategies. Distrust of the FMLN is not ideological, but rather an artifact of this truncated insurgent political experience that penetrated only the highland communities of San Ildefonso, and even there left an mixed legacy. With the collapse of the Christian Democrats, the political vacuum has been filled by marginalized provincial elites with no clear party loyalty.

As a result, San Ildefonso's agrarian structure was only partly transformed by the war. The space opened for a reallocation of local power to NGOs, gremios or other local actors has been contested by a weak and divided insurgent mobilization network on one side and a diminished, ideologically undisciplined provincial elite on the other. What's left is a terrain where an empowerment-by-invitation strategy and an empowerment-through-conflict strategy compete, but neither became consolidated. A combined suspicion among many land beneficiaries regarding opportunities to challenge structures of power and a significant cushion of goodwill and economic control among provincial elites have contributed to an ambivalence

⁸⁸⁰ In 2000, an urban based, former PDC organizer ran as FMLN candidate and split the opposition vote to Costanza, winning on 24% of the total vote.

toward both empowerment strategies. The core insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks have distanced themselves from the uncertainty of this contested zone leaving a mutual sense of abandonment.

E. CONCLUSION

Roberto Angulo, Miguel García, and Orlando Arevalo all now sit in the legislative chamber of post-war El Salvador some three decades after each chose different collective action strategies for resolving agrarian inequality that had pushed San Vicente and the country to the brink of war. Their respective political careers closely track the hard-line counter-insurgent, insurgent, and moderate counter-insurgent empowerment strategies that distinguish the three case study municipalities. None are currently members of the political party in which they made their initial political ascent, a reflection of the tensions that drive the ongoing recomposition elites within all three mobilization networks. Yet, each represents a different empowerment strategy that has been adapted by mobilization networks in the Jiboa Valley, Tecoluca, and San Ildefonso and to the political opportunity of decentralized rural development since 1992.

Land inequality remains a fact of life in El Salvador, but some communities are no longer paralyzed by this formidable obstacle to development. This chapter illustrates how variation in local land inequality helps explain the continuity or change in pre-war agrarian relations. In Tecoluca, the predatory hold of the landed elite was broken, creating space for a variety of locally driven, often contentious and collective development initiatives. NGOs, local gremios and community organizations have been assigned unprecedented authority in fulfilling high expectations for post-war development. The remarkable stability in patron-client relations in the Jiboa Valley has underscored the individualist, acquiescent and nostalgic attitudes that continue to enable top-down initiatives to favor the prerogatives of a small group of larger owners. An empowerment through invitation strategy to rural development opens very little space for local actors or new alliances to compete with, much less confront, the modernizing elites within ARENA that control the allocation of patronage and discipline dissent. In San Ildefonso, the ambivalent collaboration with both sides during the war has resulted in partial land reform, but

also the absence of a strong identity or political ally to fend off the encroachment on power by provincial elites.

The dividends of both empowerment strategies in terms of gains in economic or human capital have been small. IFI loan conditionality has been instrumental in shifting agrarian reform away from expropriation and redistribution toward the promotion and enforcement of market principles and individual property rights. As the state has withdrawn from agriculture, state sponsored social investment programs, municipal governments and internationally funded NGOs have tried to fill the gap. For the most part, none of the first generation of post-war agricultural development initiatives have succeeded in achieving sustainable livelihoods for beneficiary populations. Most shared the same defects and were never more than social compensation programs in an economic climate highly inhospitable to small scale agriculture.

Far from being monolithic, each case study illustrates different correlations of power and internal tensions between landed and modernizing elites, individual peasant farmers, organized farmer groups, NGOs, state agencies, and international financial institutions. Counter-insurgent empowerment strategies have relied to a greater extent on the top-down benevolence of the state and the disciplinary capacity of hierarchical institutions such as COENA to manage an orderly reduction in economic dependence on agriculture. In contrast, insurgent empowerment strategies opened greater space for local institutions to explore alternative post-war agricultural development alliances and challenge the retreat of the state from the agricultural economy through the contentious and mobilized defense of hard won rights and assets.

The more important distinction beyond the failure to create much economic capital has been the accumulation of political capital in demonstrating a long term alternative for local economic development that rests on widespread credibility and an organizational capacity to defend it against political capture. Despite an improved post-war opportunity structure, the risks of political capture remain – illustrated by political influence on the internationally financed investments in the strengthening of rural producers in all three municipal case studies (Cooperative Nonualco and PRODAP in the Jiboa Valley, Lempa Acahuapa in San Ildefonso, and the Bajo Lempa loan in Tecoluca). Resistance to these instances of political meddling in the provision of public goods has depended on transparent, accountable and equitable structures of local governance. In Tecoluca alone, where land inequality had been reversed most profoundly, were these attributes visible.

IX. CHAPTER NINE: MESO-LEVEL EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Historical variation in political experience explains different empowerment strategies and their respective outcomes in post-war El Salvador. In response to the changing structure of political opportunity (land inequality, elite realignments, the emergence of new local institutions in reconstituted mobilization networks), political wartime experiences set otherwise similar communities on different tracks. Sharply distinct political experiences involving challenging, bottom-up versus stabilizing, top-down decentralization have influenced competing notions of empowerment that in turn have deeply marked the institutionalization of local authority in NGOs, municipal governments and their articulation with social safety net programs. Thus, the assigned roles, interests and performance of these local actors in decentralized postwar reconstruction will vary according to their respective underlying aggregate political experiences and their associated empowerment strategies. Given these different starting points, this chapter will explore how decentralization has empowered Salvadoran citizens differently by exploring their contrasting models of post-war local governance and resource mobilization.

As argued in the opening chapter of this dissertation, inequality has net undesirable effects on development that operate through a variety of mechanisms. Inequality robs development of its potential by lowering economic growth, by lowering the elasticity of growth's impact on poverty reduction, by reducing institutional capacity to respond to shocks, by increasing perverse effects such as violent crime or political instability and finally, by lowering institutional resistance to political capture. Efforts to redress inequality have deep local roots that are revealed in the types of institutions and expectations that emerged after the war. In this chapter, I focus on these micro-processes of the inequality-local governance-resource mobilization linkage in the three municipal case studies of the paracentral region.

The central argument of this chapter is that decentralization outcomes were shaped by competing empowerment strategies whose primary impact has been to change local inequality.

Where inequality remained high (unchanged) after the war, decentralization has tended to reinforce local power relations that have made institutional governance susceptible to political capture by local elites as it weakened the capacity for local collective action. By contrast, where inequality was lowered, decentralization has tended to reinforce this shift by opening new, more democratic spaces for local governance and strengthening the capacity and prioritization of collective action that diminishes exposure to political capture. The economic outcomes of these contrasting local scenarios, albeit still very much in their incipient stages, underscore the profound impact that inequality has for local development initiatives.

Given the ambiguous mandate of decentralization in post-war El Salvador, this chapter proceeds on a more systematic basis in exploring how the empowerment claims of decentralized development might be evaluated. Effective decentralization assumes that local actors will be empowered to act collectively to hold local institutions more accountable than remote, centralized, possibly corrupt agencies. By collective action, I refer to the coordination, management and delivery of a basket of local public goods essential for rural development--roads, extension services, power, telecommunications, irrigation, education, public health, sanitation, and security. In the provision of local public goods, collective action involves mobilization of money, labor and material resources, the design of rules governing resource use, the monitoring of rule compliance, and the enforcement of sanctions against rule breakers – all of which must be coordinated between jurisdictions of government.

Expectations for post-war local economic development differed significantly between insurgent and counter-insurgent communities. These expectations have informed the design and performance of local institutions. Which type of political experiences are most associated with the collective capacity to confront and transform local inequality as a pre-requisite for sustainable local economic development? Using survey data as well as evidence gathered from municipal planning processes and interviews with organizational representatives, I compare local performance in three key areas of local governance: inter-municipal cooperation, inter-institutional coordination within municipal cases, and participation, transparency and accountability in local resource mobilization.

The chapter is organized in six sections, five of which compare the three local economic development experiences in the paracentral zone with attention to how political experiences and competing empowerment strategies have shaped the expectations and performance of local

institutions. Section one summarizes the trends in public investment at the national and local levels in the post-war period. The analysis of local development finance shows how decentralization has expanded new local opportunities for resource mobilization, but has failed to compensate for significant and persistent biases in public investment that do not favor local economic development in rural areas. Section two compares the local politics of inter-municipal coordination, explaining how the emergence of municipal government has prevented close cooperation for departmental level initiatives. Section three describes the variation in institutional fields (organizational density and ties) and evaluates efforts to surmount challenges to institutional coordination. Section four compares the level of citizen participation, transparency and overall effectiveness of budget making and resource mobilization in each municipal government. A specific comparison of the *cabildo abierto* process illustrates how competing empowerment strategies have aligned the performance of this participatory mechanism to insurgent and counter-insurgent expectations for local institutions. Section five reviews the evidence on agency for insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies, linking them with concrete examples of political capture. The final section concludes by summarizing the factors that make decentralization work at the institutional level.

A. PUBLIC INVESTMENT AND POLITICAL CAPTURE

Decentralized local governance suggests a reallocation of public investment, which has traditionally favored urban areas and politically connected rural elites. Large public infrastructure projects in the export boom of the 1950s and 1960s are the earliest example of this type of political capture. Credit, market information, and protections of monopoly power historically have been skewed toward those already controlling wealth in key productive sectors despite competition between elites for the largest share. This vicious cycle of self-reinforcing inequality has endured periodic horizontal redistribution of opportunity within the Salvadoran elite, yet has stifled vertical redistribution of opportunity. Has the emergence of new local institutions altered this pattern of investment and concomitant inequality in the post-war period?

1. Public Investment and Spending Trends

Development finance is at the center of decentralization and El Salvador has been rather reluctant to share the already low levels of public resources with local actors. At the fifteenth annual conference of mayors in San Salvador in 1999, speakers from nearly every political party and rank insisted that decentralization reforms have worked in El Salvador, but must go further. Typical was the intervention of a consultant for USAID, one of the strongest institutional proponents of decentralization, who stated, “There is a strong correlation between underdevelopment and the level of public expenditure, in the most underdeveloped countries of the world - the most backward countries are the most centralized ones, where the municipality represents nothing.”⁸⁸¹ Echoing a common refrain, the state is the problem.

Yet, this argument is built upon popular misconception of the Latin American state. The Salvadoran state is small by both Latin American standards, and by developing country standards. Before the war, Salvadoran government spending was about half of OECD levels, and about two-thirds the East Asian average. By the late 1980s early 1990s, public spending in El Salvador had fallen further behind, at 33% and 50%, respectively. Even by Latin American standards, the Salvadoran government spends less than 60% of the regional average. The Salvadoran state was small during the 1970s, grew in proportion to the externally financed war economy of the 1980s, then declined again towards the end of the war.

In the 1990s, public spending has remained flat, inching up to 15% by 1998. Since then, the added expenditures of the pension reform and response to natural disasters has pushed central government expenses to 18%. Low central government expenditures are in part due to one of the world’s lowest levels of tax revenue - hovering between 10-12% of GDP. Decentralization originated not from the overextension of the state, but from a political crisis resulting from a weak state and dominant private sector. As a result, El Salvador’s investment and savings levels also tend to be low by peer country standards. Savings have dropped from 18% in 1994 to about

⁸⁸¹ Comments of Dr. Marino Henao, Consultant for the USAID office for human development, published in *Proyección Municipal*. (Oct-Dic. 1999), San Salvador: COMURES. p. 41

11% currently (2003). Investment levels have stagnated at about 16% since 1998, down from 20% in 1995. These notable deficiencies in national resource mobilization reverberate at the local level, where El Salvador only 3.3% of total spending was done at the sub-national level (COMURES 2003).

Table 9.1 compares the development finance over the past three decades. The balance of influence has shifted from U.S. bilateral cooperation (which comprised 80% of tax revenue in the 1980s) toward the multilateral lending in the 1990s. Remittances from the estimated 1.5 million Salvadorans living abroad now contribute as much in foreign exchange as the equivalent domestic tax base of 2.4 million (economically active population in 1998). Table 9.1 also underscores El Salvador's dependence on foreign resources for investment toward development (about 60% of overall investment including remittances) - a dependence that has persisted since the late 1970s.⁸⁸²

Bilateral cooperation (typically non-reimbursable) has declined by over 50%, propped up still by recurrent flows for disaster reconstruction. The level of funding through INGOs has also declined, reaching as high as \$25-30 million per year in the early 1990s. The INGO flows have equaled roughly half of the USAID commitments and two thirds of FISDL project funding, thus representing a significant financial source at the local level.⁸⁸³ Finally, El Salvador's investment grade rating in 2000 has permitted access to the international bond market and the government has placed commercial market debt to offset a growing fiscal deficit. The country's total public debt has increased to 45% of GDP with debt service consuming a third of public revenues (IMF 2005).

⁸⁸² IDB (2001f: 7, Table I-1). The IDB alone has loaned El Salvador \$430 million for three road investment programs. Of the \$155 million that El Salvador invested in all aspects of its road system between 1995-1999, external financing accounted for 54.5%. In 2000-2004, dependence on external financing of roads increased to 59.2%.

⁸⁸³ The INGO estimates are based on Biekart (1994), Gonzalez (1992), Foley (1997), and organizational interviews, adjusting for overlap between INGO and bilateral cooperation.

Table 9.1 Development Finance in El Salvador, 1970-2002

Yearly Average (\$ million)	GDP	Cent Govt Tax Rev	FDI	Ext. Pub Loans (IFIs)	Ext Priv Mkt Loans ⁸⁸⁴ (bonds)	U.S. ODA	Other Bilat ODA	INGOs	Remit	Debt ⁸⁸⁵
El Sal 1970s		260		45	0	12	?	?	35	500
El Sal 1980s		440		75	0	360	?	?	127	1,500
El Sal 1990s	10,300	990	207	275	0	145	40	20-25	885	3,300
El Sal 1998	12,000	1,228	900	260	0	35	100	15-20	1,340	3,633
El Sal 2002-3	14,300	1,595	286	650	500	30	140	10-15	2,032	5,600
<p>Sources: World Bank Development Indicators (2003); World Bank Global Development Finance (2003); El Salvador Treasury Ministry, IMF (various years); IDB-Pew Remittance Study (2006). Agosin et al. (2002, 2004), PNUD (2000), BCR (2000)</p> <p>a. IFIs include IMF, WB, & IDB;</p> <p>b. Donor NGOs include CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, Project Concern International, Oxfam International affiliates, World Vision, the SHARE Foundation, Lutheran World Federation, Action Aid, Christian Aid-UK, COSUDE, Acsur las Segovias, PTM, HIVOS, NOVIB, Diakonia, all of whose budgets are estimated excluding direct governmental support. U.S. ODA includes both U.S. economic & military aid</p>										

2. Distribution of National Public Spending

Despite commitments to decentralize public expenditure, a pattern of highly centralized investment persists. Figure 9.1 illustrates the geographical focus of public investment in 1999, and on average between 1993-2001 compared to 1998 poverty levels and population shares.⁸⁸⁶ Almost 45% of all public investment goes to San Salvador and La Libertad, despite relatively

⁸⁸⁴ In July of 2000, \$354 million in international bonds were issued to finance part of the budget deficit, and accelerating the increase in the country's internal debt.

⁸⁸⁵ The most recent estimates (Sept 2004) put the total national debt at \$7.2 billion, or 46% of GDP and rising. IMF (2005).

⁸⁸⁶ Source for this information is the Salvadoran Ministry of Treasury for non-financial public investment data, and the UNDP (2003) for poverty (average population in relative poverty, 1993-2001) and population data (1999). The public investment budget for 1999 was \$240 million.

lower poverty levels (40%) and representing only 42.3% of the population. By comparison, the departments of highest poverty (Cabañas, Ahuachapán, Morazán, San Vicente and Chalatenango) all of which receive a share of the national investment budget that is smaller than their population share and far below levels needed to breach the historic inequity between urban and rural investment.

San Vicente, with only 2.6% of the national population has received only 2.4% of public investment on average between 1993-2001, despite having the third highest level of poverty. In 1999, Cabañas and Morazán received 0.2% and 0% of public investment respectively. Even departments with the second and third largest cities (San Miguel and Santa Ana), have less than half of their population share in public investment. Clearly, the national budget favors the metropolitan San Salvador area.⁸⁸⁷

In turn, social spending has also been low, but more importantly, that spending has been skewed away from rural populations. The National Reconstruction Plan committed to increase health and education spending from 2.7% of GDP in 1989 to 4.6% by 1994. This goal in addition to most other social spending benchmarks, were missed by the Salvadoran government. Despite massive aid flows, spending on health and education only reached 3.2% of GDP by 1995. By 1998, El Salvador spent on 4.3% on education and health, below the Latin America average and other countries at similar levels of development.⁸⁸⁸ El Salvador continues to sustain one of the lowest levels of overall public social spending (8.1% GDP, including social security).

⁸⁸⁷ The total allocation of national public investment has improved, but remains heavily biased toward urban areas. For example, some 70% of health spending goes to urban hospitals.

⁸⁸⁸ The World Bank estimates that El Salvador still faces a deficit of 3.2% - 3.6% of its GDP in additional social spending to meet minimal education, health and social protection goals (2004).

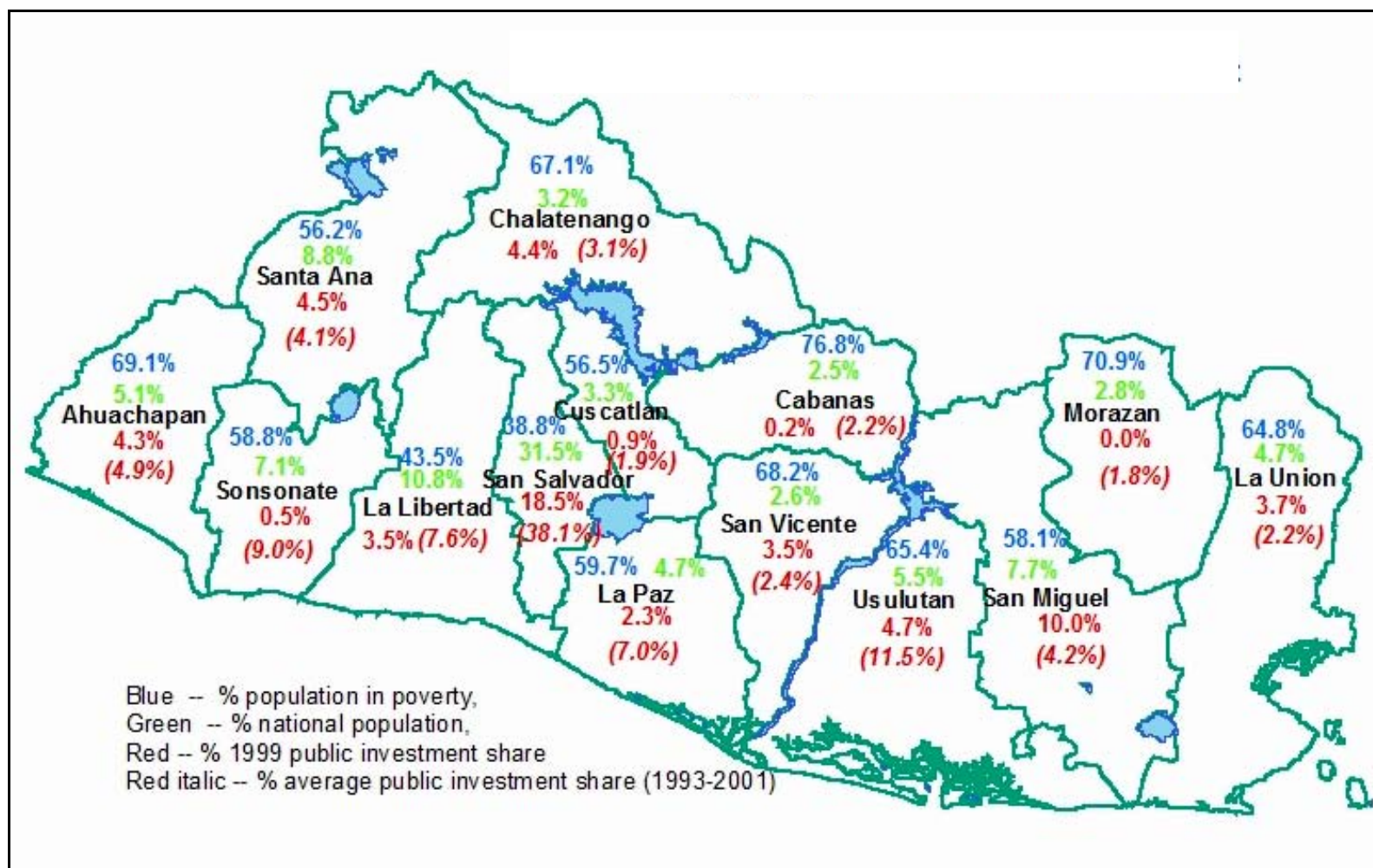


Figure 9.1 Poverty, Population and Public Investment

3. Local Revenue and Spending Trends

Local governments are the primary, although not the exclusive channel for development finance flows to the local level. Typically, local public finance can be one of five main sources: local taxes, inter-governmental transfers, international cooperation, community based donations (in kind and monetary) and borrowing. There are competing arguments about which source or what composition of revenue flows are most likely to be associated with local empowerment.

Raich (2005: 6) argues that increased locally generated revenues are more likely to improve local accountability and participation. “The more capacity that local governments have to extract revenue from their own tax bases, the greater their accountability to citizens. Conversely, the more fiscally dependent on the other non-local sources of revenue, the less locally accountable to citizens they would be.”

However, many small, poor municipalities face natural limits on raising needed development revenue locally, making this argument contingent on the municipal size and capacity. In the case study municipalities of the paracentral region, high levels of poverty translate into as few as 10 and no more than 50 individuals declaring income tax or making value added tax payments. Given the insufficient amounts and relatively fixed menu of projects that can be funded with transfers through ISDEM or FISDL, Salvadoran local governments have the option of looking outside the conventional channels to the private sector, NGOs or directly to bilateral and multilateral cooperation for additional development finance. These alternative sources of local finance are not only important as supplements to local tax revenue, but in terms of increasing the discretion with which local governments can allocate resources. Others argue that budget flexibility is more important than the source (Hansohm 2002).

Another problem with an exclusive focus on primary source or composition of local revenue is the tendency to ignore the distribution. Rauch argues that transfers and aid are associated with the lower accountability, suggesting the strong possibility of capture by central government or external donors. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2000) argue that of the three primary financing mechanisms for local governments (local taxes, user fees, and transfers), user fees are the least ambiguously immune to elite capture. Local taxes, if national patterns are any indication, are likely to be regressive. Pro-poor transfer spending that is contingent on projects

can be diverted to non-poor users. Devas (2002) is neutral on local revenue source, and argues that the effectiveness of service provision is what matters most. However this also assumes an assessment of the cost sharing with service access.

Of equal significance is how local institutions manage to mobilize collective action to achieve increased development resources. To take the challenge of tax reform or tax compliance, a Market strategy would focus on promoting the intrinsic value of improvement of local services and governance to encourage individual taxpayers to comply with existing or new taxes. Alternatively, new local taxes might be levied with little consideration for perceived value, relying instead on a Hierarchy strategy of generalized coercion to enforce compliance and reduce evasion. A Community strategy would seek to socialize the population about the fairness or moral commitment to a tax to stimulate compliance. A Contract strategy that is based on taxpayer voluntarism with a targeted, escalating penalty only on the detected delinquents might be the most effective compromise.

Monitoring and enforcement activities and costs are also related to the performance of any local tax initiative. The *cabildo abierto* serves as the most common mechanism for controlling local resource use, both revenues and expenditures. Collective action strategies toward improving participation in the *cabildo abierto* as a legitimating control mechanism, outlined in chapter one, are therefore relevant to improving revenue collection strategies themselves.

A Market strategy would focus on the costs and benefits (perceived and real) of individual participation. The perceived benefits might be raised by increases in the budget, which is positively associated with citizen participation. As such, we should expect the FODES increase in 1998 to enable greater *cabildo* participation. Lack of transparency and perceptions of corruption are also act as a disincentive to citizen participation in municipal meetings. A risk taking Market strategy might involve greater transparency about past budget implementation, or the expected impact of the proposed budget to build confidence and commitment in the *cabildo* process. The costs of participation might also be lowered through subsidies to reimburse travel costs.

However, there are many reasons why Market strategies for collective action fail. The examples of participatory budgeting that demonstrate the budget size-citizen participation association leaves unclear whether the increased budgets have contributed to greater incentives

to participate or whether participatory mechanisms led to increased revenues and budgets.⁸⁸⁹ Given the incapacity or unwillingness regarding financial transparency in the context of weak institutions and power asymmetries, such a strategy would likely require negotiation, force, or cultural incentives.

A Contract strategy may compensate for some of these deficiencies through prior negotiations over the distribution of benefits, the representation in the rule making process, or increase in the numbers of socio-economically disadvantaged participants to ensure their voice is heard. Still, as with the Market strategy, the Contract strategy toward participation emphasizes influence over the rationality of individual participation.

A Hierarchy strategy would focus on selective benefits and sanctions as incentives for participation of a targeted population. The selective benefit/sanction strategy might be oriented in two ways. A clientelist orientation often used by political bosses might provide some bonus (per diem) or threat (verified by attendance lists) to people dependent upon the patron to ensure participation that was ultimately reinforcing of the power relations between the patron and client. Alternatively, the patron might provide the same incentives to coerce participation of groups that are not necessarily dependent and whose participation coincides with a view of the common good. For example, a benevolent despot might enable the voice of excluded groups through lowered costs of participation (i.e. holding a meeting in remote, high poverty communities) in a way that might be oriented toward strengthening community norms and dispositions at the eventual expense of the despot's power.

Finally, a Community strategy might appeal to existing norms of reciprocity and past experiences of collective action that encourage participation in the *cabildo* to ensure democratic representation. A Community strategy does not require incentives from outside or a priori bargaining, but relies instead on informal organizing that is flexible yet appropriate to each new instance of representation. While costs and benefits matter to the effectiveness of community collective action strategies, they are not decisive. Particularly in contexts where participation implies the possibility of physical intimidation or even violence, it is likely that only the type of communal solidarity that values the right to participate will be sufficient for it to occur. With

⁸⁸⁹ Souza (2001). Fox and Aranda (1996) suggest the converse is also true, small budgets prevent or act as a disincentive for rural or indigenous participation in Oaxaca, Mexico.

these possible revenue collective action strategies in mind, we return next to El Salvador's actual performance at the national and local levels.

a. Tax collection:

Between 1992 and 2003, national tax revenue in El Salvador hovered at 10% to 12% of the GDP, near the bottom in Latin America and perhaps as low as half the level compatible with its level of development.⁸⁹⁰ Raising domestic tax revenues was expected to be one of the big payoffs of neoliberal reforms. ARENA's tax reform during the Cristiani administration (1989-1994) consisted of simplification (elimination of the wealth tax and the coffee export tax, reduction of corporate taxes from 30% to 25%, a significant reduction of income taxes for the upper bracket, converting the sales (stamp) tax to a value added tax in 1991 and the steady elimination of trade tariffs. Calderón Sol raised the VAT from 10 to 13% in 1995. The VAT now represents 63% of all tax income, and combined with the other reforms, has produced a highly regressive system.⁸⁹¹

Of taxes collected, almost 90% comes from the departments of San Salvador and La Libertad. Most of the paracentral region departments collect less than 7% of the national tax base and have only several thousand contributors. The UNDP (2003) shows that tax collection for small municipalities like Nuevo Tepetitán, for example, is only \$40,260 or \$8.6 per each of its 28 registered income or VAT tax payers, while San Salvador collects over \$700 million in taxes, where the 77,000 taxpayer average more than \$1,300.

Total municipal revenue between 1986-1989 amounted to about 2.5% the national budget (without Municipalities in Action or CONARA transfers). By 1999, total municipal revenues had declined to less than 0.5% of GDP (about \$50 - \$60 million), and 40% of this is collected in San Salvador.⁸⁹² Reliable municipal budget data is notoriously difficult to find in El Salvador. However, Gallagher (1999) estimates that the median value of taxes collected by Salvadoran

⁸⁹⁰ See Velasco and Rodríguez (2003), Barriex et al., (2005), IMF (2005) for estimates of tax burden for El Salvador.

⁸⁹¹ In 2004, a tax reform was passed which included a temporary tax amnesty for delinquents, generating 1.5% of GDP and providing some indication of the level of prior evasion (IMF 2005).

⁸⁹² Goetz, et al (1992); Gallagher (1999) Local revenues consist local direct taxes (fees charged on urban properties, business tax on net assets), fees for services (public lighting, cemeteries, market space, sanitation) and licenses (birth, death, marriage, civil registry).

municipality of about 10,000 inhabitants in 1998 is \$21,110, or about \$2.4 per capita. This compares to the median transfer (FODES) amount of \$265,000 (\$26.7 per capita). Thus the median total budget for Salvadoran municipalities at just below \$300,000 is heavily dependent on transfers versus local tax revenue.

The obstacles to increasing municipal financial autonomy through tax reform remains an urgent task, but blocked more by political obstacles than technical ones. ARENA and many in the Salvadoran private sector tend to view poverty as the result of individual failure, and are reluctant to redistribute taxes to compensate for bad choices. Secondly, central government officials oppose the surrender of fiscal authority to the municipalities and use influence in the National Assembly to block most local tax proposals. Finally, certain measures, such as a property tax are most likely to be progressive (the tax rate is positively associated with wealth or assets) and are thus vetoed by the wealthy or would be effectively captured if implemented by weak local officials.⁸⁹³

A locally controlled property tax would be the most effective and efficient tool to increase municipal financial autonomy and reduce dependence on transfers.⁸⁹⁴ El Salvador is the only Central American country without a property tax (Dillinger 1991; Gallagher 1999; Tanzi 1987; Bird 1974). Globally, property taxes generate 40-75% of municipal revenues and up to 3% of GDP. According to one study by USAID, which has endorsed the introduction of a property tax since the early 1990s, “a local property tax, locally controlled, would reverse a paternalistic tradition of central government control and local dependence existing for more than a century in El Salvador” (Goetz, Pace and Stout 1992). Indeed, median estimates of annual tax receipts that could be collected by a sliding flat tax on the area and value of land in El Salvador were \$12,500 (for area method) and \$88,000 (for self-assessed value method), the latter equal to over four times the median tax receipts in 1998.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹³ It might be argued that the prior existence of the Wealth Tax, which was also progressive in theory, contradicts this argument. However, the wealth tax was widely evaded, generating no more than 5% of tax revenue, and was quickly dispensed with in 1992.

⁸⁹⁴ See Loria Chaves (2000), and Gallagher (2000), that compare several alternative tax instruments to raise municipal revenue (eg. earmarking VAT taxes, income taxes, ecological taxes, and property taxes based on value or area).

⁸⁹⁵ A value based land tax levies not only the land area but the value of improvements made to it.

Yet, despite efforts by USAID, the SRN, and FUSADES, various property tax initiatives have failed to gain approval in the National Assembly, which retains authority over the setting of new tax rates.⁸⁹⁶ Upon his election as the first FMLN mayor of San Salvador, Hector Silva proposed a modification of the asset tax for the city.⁸⁹⁷ The measure, like all subsequent efforts to pass relatively modest property tax proposals, was roundly rejected by the business gremios (ANEP, ASI, ABANSA, CASALCO). In 2001 under FMLN leadership, COMURES also lobbied a value based land tax proposal based on USAID research.⁸⁹⁸ However, no consensus within COMURES was possible when the proposed legislation was presented at the 17th National Mayor's Congress, and it was decided that the Corporation would cease promotion of such a tax (RDL 2003: 144).

Another obstacle is the general lack of transparency regarding tax payment, where the traditional interpretation of privacy provisions in the law prohibits open access to relevant information, such as cadastral information. Two World Bank loans have gone toward renovating the national property registry (CNR), however the cost of this information effectively excludes poor people. The CNR has also refused to collaborate with large municipalities, such as the eleven that compose the San Salvador Metropolitan Area, by negotiating a reasonable fee for access to the new property registry. Although financed by national debt, the CNR has treated the registry information, which is essential for implementing any property tax, as a private good.

Despite a decade of intense and expensive lobbying backed by U.S. financed empirical research, property tax proposals have failed. Gallagher places equal blame on the parochial self-interest of the private sector and the weakness of COMURES as an effective advocate.⁸⁹⁹ Various experts contend that simple, self-assessment based on flat rates that exempt the smallest

⁸⁹⁶ According to the tax code, municipalities can propose tax reforms, but the National Assembly must ratify them.

⁸⁹⁷ Silva's proposal involved modifying the current tax rate tables on property to bring them into compliance with the General Municipal Tax Law (passed into law in 1991), which prohibits regressive taxation. A study funded by USAID determined that of 95 tax reform bills, only 1 complied with the Municipal Tax Law. Of another 73 tax reform bills that had been approved, none were in full compliance. See Gallagher (2000).

⁸⁹⁸ "Bill proposal for a Law to Create a Value Based Asset Tax," Oct 2001

⁸⁹⁹ Interview Mark Gallagher, August, 2001

properties would generate significant revenue for municipalities – effectively replacing transfers.⁹⁰⁰

b. Inter-governmental transfers

Municipal revenue remains highly dependent upon inter-governmental transfers (FODES). Until 1998, transfers amounted to 1% of public spending, or \$14.3 million.⁹⁰¹ The increase to 6% resulted in a transfer of \$82 million in 1998, of which \$1.14 million was for administration costs for ISDEM and FISDL.⁹⁰² Of the balance, 80% is earmarked for capital investment in the form of local infrastructure projects (5% for pre-investment expense and 95% for direct investment). The remaining 20% (\$16.3 million) can be spent on municipal administrative costs (50% for salaries, 50% on other expenses, including 1% returned to ISDEM, COMURES and FISDL in the form of membership quotas). Between 1998 and 2003, total FODES transfers have averaged \$94 million.

Of this amount, 38% of FODES during 1998 was channeled through FISDL, financed by loans from the IDB and BCIE. The other 62% was channeled through ISDEM. The lack of resources to implement the 6% transfer resulted in long delays and confusion about the differing conditions of each agency.⁹⁰³ The funding for small infrastructure projects was distributed according to a complex formula that weights municipalities according to their population (50%), a poverty index (20%), territorial extension (5%), and 25% gets distributed equally to all 262.⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰⁰ Because small farmers (less than 5 ha) would be effectively exempt and conditions would balance the impact on cooperatives, a property tax would be one of the most progressive taxes possible.

⁹⁰¹ As noted, CONARA and MEA transfers represented as much as \$10 million annually and 50% of local revenue on average.

⁹⁰² The total amount transferred never actually reached 6%, increasing from 5.66% in 1998 to 5.94% in 2002. The highest percentage of FODES transfers that derived from national budget resources was also 2002, at 95%. RDL (2003: 138).

⁹⁰³ Mayors complained that ISDEM, FISDL, MEA/SRN each had different spending requirements and auditing procedures.

⁹⁰⁴ The funds are assigned with several conditions. Only 20% of all FODES funds may be used for institutional costs, the remaining 80% must be invested in projects. Dependency on FODES transfers is high. One estimate suggests that over 90% of municipalities receive FODES transfers equal to or exceeding their own revenue generations Gallagher (1999).

The boost in transfers in 1998 dramatically increased overall budgets (as much as threefold), increased capital expenditures by local governments, and reduced the locally generated revenue share of local income from 75% in 1997 to an average of 26% (1998-2002).⁹⁰⁵

If transfers are considered a gift rather than a right by local governments and citizens, Rauch (2005) suggests that transfers are likely to shift a local government's accountability upward toward the politicians and officials that have most influence over these flows. Others espouse the fiscal concerns that without greater performance requirements (revenue sharing, matching funds, infrastructure maintenance, administrative efficiency), that without suitable accountability mechanisms, transfers can contribute to less effective governance.

There is some evidence from a recent survey of 20 Salvadoran municipalities that a third of state transfers are spent in areas in which the central government has primary responsibility (health, education, water, electrification) (COMURES 2003). To do so, other areas where the municipality has exclusive responsibility (tertiary roads) are receiving less attention. For this sample of municipalities, transfers represent 68% of municipal income. This emphasizes the confusion that prevails over distinct authority between levels of government and how transfers may be shifting burdens to already over strapped municipalities without the commensurate control over the revenues.

How transfers are viewed depends on the context, a political factor that is central to this study. In fact, it is entirely possible that some localities both view a redistribution of resources by the state as an entitlement and identify the state as a legitimate target of political pressure. Some donors view this prospect of *asistencialismo* as a defect of centralization. Proponents of strong state-society relations view demand making toward the state not as dependence but empowered action. Benefactors that manage hierarchical patronage networks are skeptical of any new transfers that challenge their own distribution of selective benefits or may divert local demand making beyond parochial issues.

By any standard, the \$100 million in annual state transfers to 262 municipalities falls far short of meeting local needs.⁹⁰⁶ Rather than settle for insufficient local resources, the local

⁹⁰⁵ Source is ISDEM chart comparing locally generated revenue (taxes and fees) with total local total municipal income (not including income earmarked for projects). <http://www.isdem.gob.sv>, accessed December 2005

⁹⁰⁶ As noted in chapter three, El Salvador ranks well below other Latin American countries in terms of the national budget share transferred to local government.

government in this context is expected to facilitate advocacy for more resources toward various agencies of the state. Whether this strategy precludes local burden sharing for increased revenue through new taxes or cost cuts remains an open question. The effect of transfers on accountability depends on the context.

c. International cooperation & remittances

Aid flows to El Salvador have declined by 50% from wartime highs of \$360-\$400 million per year during the 1980s (largely from the U.S.). UNDP estimates of technical and financial cooperation flows to El Salvador between 1992-1998 suggest that annual bilateral assistance averaged \$180 million, multilateral assistance averaged \$275 million, and cooperation channeled through INGOs averaged \$8 million.⁹⁰⁷ Total cooperation flows during this period summed to \$466 million annually. Prior to the spike in aid flows in response to the 1998 hurricane and the 2001 earthquakes, bilateral flows dropped from \$330 million in 1993 by 80% to \$48 million in 1998. At the same time, multilateral flows (over 90% of which are loans), increased from \$116 million in 1992 to over \$400 million in 1997, and have become the largest source of discretionary development finance.⁹⁰⁸

Much more can be said about INGO funding. The UNDP data underestimates by as much as perhaps 50% the likely amount that INGOs channeled to El Salvador in the early post-war period. The largest U.S. INGOs, such as Plan International, CARE, CRS had annual budgets of between \$4 and \$7 million during peak years in the post-war period, inflated by medicine and food aid transfers. Still, the top 10 INGOs sustained average budgets of over \$1 million during the 1990s.⁹⁰⁹ The estimate of \$15-20 million in total INGO cooperation considers net flows (excluding USAID, bilateral contracts).

⁹⁰⁷ UNDP Summary of Technical and Financial Cooperation by Institution and Sector, 1993-1998, mimeo.

⁹⁰⁸ IFI loans are typically conditioned upon a 5-20% counterpart financing from the national government. IFIs also provide as much as \$10 million in non-reimbursable financing, in the form of grants and analytical contributions.

⁹⁰⁹ There are no reliable estimates of INGO funding flows, in part due to the lack of financial transparency in this sector (gross figures are provided in INGO annual reports), but national program budgets are rare.

At the municipal level, flows of INGO and NGO funding sometimes exceed the municipal budget. However, these resources are rarely taken into account as official local finance. This off-budget status of INGO and NGO funds typically delinks them from the accountability mechanisms at the disposal of citizens and the local government. While INGOs and NGOs are responsive, in varying degrees, to local assemblies and boards of directors, these accountability mechanisms are nascent and hardly uniform across the sector. There are no minimal standards for transparency or accountability. Under these circumstances, it is highly possible that large amounts of aid can undermine the accountability that local governments have to their citizens, at the same time that it fortifies the responsiveness that these institutions have to their donors. Lack of coordination between non-governmental organizations only exacerbates this problem.

Remittances have more than doubled since 1990, now totaling almost \$3 billion per year. Although household surveys underestimate by about 66%-75% the official remittance flows of the BCR, they provide a possible indication of departmental and municipal remittance flows. EHPM surveys suggest that San Vicente, which represents 2.5% of the national population, received \$6.4 million in remittances in 1998, and \$13.2 million in 2002. San Vicente's share of national remittance flows is about 2%, and 22.5% of the households reported receiving remittances. If adjustments were made to correct for under-reporting, San Vicente could be receiving between \$12 and \$20 million annually in remittances between 1999 and 2002. Considering that the department's share of public investment is less than \$10 million, the significance of remittances becomes obvious. Nevertheless, the lack of reliable local data on household remittance receipts allows no more than highly speculative estimates.⁹¹⁰

d. Community donations

Most municipal funding requires at least a 20% community counterpart donation of donated labor or in-kind material donations. Bases on estimates of the official development assistance

⁹¹⁰ Although speculative as well, it is worth adding that in terms of transfer charges, San Vicentians are paying companies like Western Union between \$4 and \$6 million, conservatively, to send remittances home.

(ODA) and FODES funding that is likely spent on projects, the annual value of community donations could be as high as \$30 million.⁹¹¹

e. Borrowing

Municipal governments are legally prohibited from running a deficit. However a few municipal governments have taken on debt through ISDEM, using FODES flows as a guarantee. Between 2000-2003, total accumulated municipal debt totals \$70 million, with 18.6% owed to ISDEM and the rest to commercial banks. Current municipal debt taken by five of the largest municipalities is about \$12 million, quite low by developing country standards.

Table 9.2 provides a breakdown of global spending on decentralization programs in the civil war and post-war periods.

Table 9.2 Expenditures on Decentralization Programs in El Salvador (US\$ mn)

	Min. Interior CONARA MEA, DIDECO	CONARA/S RN FIS/FISDL	FODE S ISDE M	COMUR ES	International Programs
1980-83	\$ 42	-	-	-	
1984-89	\$21.5	-	-	-	
1989-94	\$113.5	\$93	\$14	\$0.75	\$5.0
1994-1999	n.d.	\$165	\$108	\$4.0	\$10.0
1999-2000	n.d.	\$110	\$149	\$2.0	\$5.0
Sources: CONARA data from Austin, Flores and Stout (1988); MEA data from MSI 1996, M. Rodríguez estimated total MEA funding at \$150 million.; COMURES – the gremio of mayors, budget comes from international grants and dues from each of the 262 municipalities; International Programs - include the principal externally funded programs of local development sponsored by EU, UNDP, GTZ, DIAKONIA, USAID-(RTI, FUNDE, FUSAI, SACDEL, FUNDEMUNI, FUNDAUNGO, FEMICA) UNICEF, SPAIN					

⁹¹¹ This estimate assumes that only between 75-80% of total transfers of these three sources (\$275 million) are potentially available for projects after administrative costs, and discounted further (50-75%) for tied purchase requirements for ODA and INGO funding.

In sum, while local revenues have increased, largely due to state transfers and remittance flows, even the best governed local development initiatives have inadequate rural investment. Addressing this deficit requires not only good administration of the resources that exist, but aggressive, creative, possibly contentious demand making toward government and donors to mobilize greater resources for rural areas. Tax reform is one avenue, although local governments can't do it alone. Coordination among local actors and looking beyond local resources toward an expansive resource mobilization strategy is likely to be most effective. I turn now to the case study municipalities to assess the respective approaches and performance in the design and implementation of local economic development.

B. COMPETING EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES⁹¹²

1. Demographics & Local Politics

The severity of the civil war in San Vicente made it the only one of El Salvador's fourteen departments to experience a negative population growth rate between 1971 and 1992 (0.33% per year).⁹¹³ By 1992, about 33% of the San Vicente population resided in San Salvador or adjacent La Libertad, the highest share of any department (Melara et al. 2004b: 37). Tecoluca and San Ildefonso are only now returning to 1971 population levels. Government control in much of the

⁹¹² Research of Tecoluca upon which my own investigation rests include FUNDE (1997),; Fogaroli and Stowell (1997) . Serena Fogaroli, co-author of the latter study, and Andrew Cummings of FUNDE, active in participant researcher in Tecoluca since 1994, generously provided historical and in-depth community knowledge that greatly facilitated what I now know about the communities that I visited. Eric Marchand (IIZ) and the documents produced by the EU program, San Vicente Productivo provided equally important background data for San Ildefonso. For the Jiboa Valley, relatively less detailed documentation was available, but GTZ (the German Aid Agency) and SVP background research was relied on here.

⁹¹³ Population growth was near zero (+0.25%) for Usulután, and 1.4% for La Paz.

Jiboa Valley prevented the same level of violence and thus slowed the rate of population expulsion.

Economic restructuring in the 1990s added to the political violence of the prior decade to increase international migration. Estimates of the number of households receiving remittances (22.5% in 2002), households headed by women (34%) and persistent levels of extreme poverty (28%) all indicate the exodus of working age men (and increasingly, women) to the U.S. and other countries.

According to the 1992 census, just over 16,746 people were living in Tecoluca. By 1998, the population had grown to 26,000. In six short years after the Peace Accords, the population had increased by over 50%. This massive population growth represented a flow of displaced residents originally from Tecoluca, as well as many new migrants, some from neighboring departments and municipalities and others from as far as Chalatenango, northern San Miguel or Morazán.⁹¹⁴ Tecoluca had 24 *cantónes* and 69 *caseríos* before the war. The repopulation led to the creation of at least 7 new *caseríos* to accommodate the inflow of people. Tecoluca may soon recover pre-war population, which approached 31,000.⁹¹⁵

The repopulation of original villages and the formation of new settlements brought together people of all political stripes in the search for land and security, displaced by the war, or resettled formally as part of the demobilization plans. Many families with wealth before the war, fled to other cities or the U.S., and only a few have returned. With the possible exception of refugee or combatant experiences, many of the repopulated or new communities lack long-standing histories together. Trust within and between many communities was not deep.

Table 9.3 summarizes the differences in the extent of population, infrastructural and social recomposition in resettled communities as a consequence of events associated with the civil war. Based on migration data collected in the 1998 regional survey, community wide averages were used to estimate the respective percentages of original, displaced, repopulated and

⁹¹⁴ Santa Marta were repatriates from Nicaragua, San Bartolo had people from Chalatenango and repatriates from Honduras, and the majority of those in Santa Monica are from Cacaoopera, Morazán, with others from La Libertad, and Ciudad Barrios, San Miguel.

⁹¹⁵ This estimate is from 1977 (Gochez et al., 1997). The 1971 census put Tecoluca's population at 25,413, with a 3.5% population growth rate.

repatriated members as well as the overall level of community change.⁹¹⁶ Recomposition that effectively created new communities was limited to 20% of the surveyed population in the paracentral region, but was higher in Tecoluca than anywhere else.⁹¹⁷

Table 9.3 Definition of Community Change Variable⁹¹⁸

Level of Social Recomposition	Definition	Survey Frequency
1. Reduced Community of Origin	A community that experienced a net out-migration to municipal center, other cantones, neighboring municipalities or San Salvador. Post-war population is greatly reduced.	26%
2. Stable Community of Origin	A community that experienced both out-migration (early in the war) but also some in-migration from other nearby cantones and <i>caseríos</i> , including the return of original community members, temporarily displaced.	17.8%
3. Recipient Community of Origin	A municipal center, or larger cantón that experienced net in-migration from nearby cantones and municipalities, yet the original population remains the majority.	30.7%
4. Repopulated Community of Origin	Most residents were forced to abandon then repopulate the community. Net population loss, moderate transformation.	5.4%
5. New Community of Internally Displaced Refugees/Combatants	Change in residential composition, the in-migration of people who were largely displaced, demobilized from non-neighboring municipalities.	9.1%
6. New Repatriated Community	Change in residential composition, in-migration of people who returned from external exile, who originally lived in non-neighboring municipalities.	2.%
7. New Mixed Community	Change in residential composition, a combination of displaced and repatriated individuals who represent the majority of post-war residents along with a minority of original community residents.	8.5%

⁹¹⁶ The survey asked two questions related to community change. The first question asked where a respondent lived prior to the war. The second question was how many years they have lived in their current community.

⁹¹⁷ The mean for a community change score representing the cardinal scale in Table 9.3 was 5 for Tecoluca, 2.15 for Jiboa Valley and 1.9 for San Ildefonso.

⁹¹⁸ Original indicates a community that has experienced a loss or gain of residents from the nearby villages, but little change in the pre-war territorial, infrastructural or social arrangements. New indicates a community that has experienced considerable change in the original population composition, as well as the territorial, infrastructural and social arrangements.

The perceived availability of high quality land was perhaps the principal motivation for immigration. Migrants' expected that services and economic assistance would be provided, first through the SRN and aid agencies, then by the municipal authorities. For people associated with the FMLN, the party helped coordinate these inflows of people and in effect, underwrote the social contract between the repopulation and the local institutions.

Rapid resettlement of Tecoluca presented untold challenges for administration of basic services. Many began with nothing except sheet metal "champas," or provisional houses. Significant levels of cooperation facilitated meeting basic needs, but only complicated the underlying problem of territorial order. Coordination of the inflows of people and money fell to the local government. In some cases, PTT beneficiaries settled in Tecoluca long enough to secure provisional title to their share of the transferred property (particularly among demobilized Armed Forces), only then to relocate to San Salvador or elsewhere.

Traditionally, each of the 24 cantones was an independent territorial center, often associated with a large hacienda or urban center. However, beginning with the post-war governance under FMLN leaders and institutions, the municipality was subdivided geographically into six zones.⁹¹⁹ Since the arrival of CORDES and CRIPDES to San Carlos Lempa in 1991, the coastal sector has been the most organized, documenting in some detail the population change in the sector. In 1994, the coastal sector of Tecoluca was organized into a sectoral assembly that represented between 15 and 20 communities of some 718 families totaling about 2,800 people. By 1999, the total population of the sector had grown to 958 families and 3,663 people.⁹²⁰ This represents an annual increase of over 5% (more than double the national average). Some communities lost population in this period, others gained, largely due to internal migration within the sector. San Carlos Lempa, one of the principal cantones of the sector and site of CORDES regional office until 1999, saw its population increase from 368 in 1994 to over 700 in 1999, almost doubling in size.

⁹¹⁹ Seven zones if the urban town center is considered an independent unit. There remained in 1998 considerable lack of consensus on the final territorial divisions, with the idiosyncrasies of each competing development initiative contributing to a slightly different geographical framing of the municipality.

⁹²⁰ There has been no official census in El Salvador since 1992, and many view that data as obsolete for rapidly changing municipalities such as Tecoluca. Despite the slight changes in the communities that are considered part of the SES or not, the population changes between 1994 and 1998-99 are based on estimates in the population data at the *caserío* level provided by CORDES, but are comparable to a 1994 partial municipal census conducted by MIPLAN under the Social Information Initiative for the 108 municipalities that were targeted by the PRN.

What is perhaps most remarkable about this population growth is that it coincided with a period when the coastal sector of Tecoluca was damaged by four severe floods and two droughts. Many perceive the constant flooding, attributable to the rapid discharge of excess water from the reservoir of the *15 de Septiembre* hydroelectric dam, as the calculated strategy of the former landowners to drive the FMLN population out of the zone and recover their properties. Not only did the repopulation stabilize, but it grew – suggesting the depth of commitment that these insurgent communities enjoy as a defense mechanism against the challenges of post-war reconstruction. Also suggestive of this local commitment is the relatively low percentage of families (12.8%) that receive remittances (implying lower out-migration rates), compared to the 22% department average (Melara et al. 2004a).

San Ildefonso was also devastated by wartime violence, but has experienced a considerably different post-war population shift. Total population increased from just over 8,000 in 1992 to over 11,000 in 1998 – a 25% increase.⁹²¹ Part of this increase stems from a repopulation of conflictive highland communities, but does not reflect a strategic land occupation process of non-original residents that occurred in Tecoluca.

A more significant trend in the post-war period for San Ildefonso is urbanization. The municipality counted 6 cantones and 62 *caseríos* before the war. The population is divided among fewer *caseríos*, in part due to displacement by the reservoir, and is now 50% urban.⁹²² Lowland communities that were more stable during the war represent 66% of total population, while highland communities that were repopulated in 1984, represent the other third.

The final and perhaps most significant population shift in San Ildefonso has been migration to the U.S. Nearly 24% of the families in San Ildefonso report receiving remittances, one of the highest rates in the region. This suggests a prevalence of international migration and dependence on external finance that is common throughout northern San Vicente.

Population growth in the Jiboa Valley experienced the least disruption of the case studies. Estimated population in 1998 was 23,000, indicating a 10.5% growth over 1992 and largely consistent with a four decade trend. The war did cause displacement in the Jiboa Valley, mainly

⁹²¹ 1998 estimate is based on growth projections and SRN data. The SVP census of San Ildefonso in 2003 estimated municipal population at 12,814.

⁹²² Estimate from SVP (2003) based on preliminary data cited in PNODT SNIT (2004)

to San Salvador and nearby cities. Some of the region's more remote and indefensible *caseríos* were depopulated and a few are no longer occupied. Yet the magnitude of displacement was lower and in fact, the Jiboa Valley served as a refuge displaced people from nearby communities.

After the war, some resettlement of the 19 rural cantóns and 32 *caseríos* has occurred, but both urban and rural population growth has been below the national average. Migration abroad appears to be somewhat lower as indicated by the proportion of families reporting receipt of remittances, ranging from 11% in Guadalupe to 24% in Nuevo Tepetitán.

In part, the population stability was associated with the military protection of the coffee harvest, the higher number of small landowners and the negligible turnover in land ownership in the region. Anecdotal information based on interviews suggest that coffee and sugar cane farmers took pride in remaining in the region to safeguard property, but sent children to San Salvador or abroad.

The trends in post-war local politics are now well known. Table 9.4 summarizes the most recent local election trends. The FMLN has now governed in Tecoluca since 1994, one of the first municipal governments. The PCN and ARENA have rotated as the majority party in the Jiboa Valley, although the FMLN has won in the two smallest Microregion seats (Tepetitán and San Cayetano). In San Ildefonso, the near two decades of Christian Democrat rule ended in 1997, giving way to the four successive terms under the current mayor who has switched parties from ARENA to the PCN.

The paracentral region reflects national political realignments in municipal and legislative elections since 1994. On one hand, the FMLN has made steady inroads consolidating the support of one third of the electorate. ARENA, by contrast, has seen its near majority decline to a similar level of support (one third of the electorate). The PCN has displaced PDC as the third political force, advancing most rapidly where disgruntled ARENA party members defect. This new correlation of political force favors the FMLN at the local level, but continues to favor the ruling coalition (ARENA-PCN and a conservative fraction of the PDC) in control over the executive and agenda setting power in the National Assembly. Local politics in the case study municipalities mirror the vertical and horizontal realignments within the respective insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks at the national level.

In Tecoluca, the FMLN has consolidated control over municipal office by winning over 60% of the vote in the last four consecutive elections. Nicolás García voluntarily stepped aside

after two terms to compete in the FMLN primary for Congressional deputy from San Vicente, but lost in the departmental primary to the FMLN departmental coordinator. He ran again in 2003, won the nomination and was elected to the Assembly. Carlos Cortés, Tecoluca's *sindico* under García, was elected and served in the subsequent two terms as mayor, before also being elected as legislative deputy in 2006. Both García and Cortés are demobilized officers with the FMLN and like many other former insurgents, represent a generation of aspiring local politicians that seek to convert the political capital of their military experience to post-war local governance.

One third of the six council members in Tecoluca were women prior to 2000, rising to two thirds through 2003 – well above the national average of 20% of local government posts occupied by women (2000-2003).

Leading up to the 1999 elections, Tecoluca was not immune to factional divisions. Within the municipal government itself, García supported the moderates and Cortés, the “*ortodoxos*.” These divisions contributed less than full support for García's candidacy for legislator in 2000. As profound as the internal party divisions were, continuity in local office by an FMLN administration was uninterrupted as the former insurgents have continued to enjoy close to two thirds support within the municipality. ARENA, which governed Tecoluca under conditions of very low turnout from 1985 – 1994, has not polled more than 26% in the post-war period.

In San Ildefonso, the PDC base splintered between ARENA, the PCN and the FMLN. The current mayor, Maria Julia Costanza, has enjoyed solid support from urban and lowland communities despite losing nearly her entire council after they resigned in 1998 over charges of corruption. The three who resigned represented highland communities, and were replaced with lowland community representatives. Although Costanza is one of 22 women mayors (2000), no women were serving on the local council.

In addition to fighting off allegations of corruption, Costanza also lost the endorsement of her party. In 1998, COMURES sought the endorsement of San Vicente mayor's council (CDA) for a standing proposal to decentralize the execution of road repair projects, previously centralized under the administration of the highly politicized Ministry of Public Works. The proposal involved leasing the construction equipment to the CDA during the dry season. The six FMLN mayors approved the proposal and tabled the decision for CDA endorsement. ARENA mayors were instructed by the party central committee to withhold their support because

endorsement was viewed as a concession to the FMLN.⁹²³ Breaking ranks with the party leadership, Costanza, whose municipality suffers from virtually no paved roads, gave her support to the proposal. ARENA party leaders reacted by attacking Costanza personally in the media.⁹²⁴

Within the CDA, FMLN mayor García proposed a resolution that the San Vicente mayors' council issue their unanimous backing to Costanza in a public letter to ARENA. García recounted how ARENA mayors had to consult by phone with COENA officials to get permission to sign the resolution. The unanimous resolution ultimately opened a rift between ARENA, the San Vicente CDA and GTZ – one of the strongest bilateral proponents of decentralization in El Salvador.⁹²⁵ The experience also demonstrated how national party politics trumped local initiatives for ARENA officials, in stark contrast to the political autonomy with which local FMLN politicians like García appeared to operate.

The Court of Accounts has investigated several instances of apparent misuse of funds in San Ildefonso, but no penalties have been assessed. Despite the fact that such errors were likely due to poor administration, the relenting of government investigators was not unrelated to Costanza switching from ARENA to the PCN, which has historically controlled the Court. Since, defecting from ARENA, Costanza has been re-elected three times. San Ildefonso has only had two three term mayors in the post-war period, and despite the political opportunities, the FMLN has been unable to poll more than 25% of the local vote. San Ildefonso reflects the typical horizontal realignment that has forced ARENA into a more concerted bargaining relationship with the PCN.

⁹²³ Interview, Nicolás García, Dec 4, 1998

⁹²⁴ San Vicente Governor, Blanca Avalos de Angulo and officials from ISDEM, which were also lobbying for control over the transport equipment, called for Costanza's substitution, reportedly going as far as having a letter published in the national papers signed by a local doctor and questioning Costanza's mental health.

⁹²⁵ GTZ is the German aid agency that began its municipal strengthening work in San Vicente in 1997. The San Vicente CDA published a statement on Feb. 27, 1998 in national newspapers criticizing ISDEM and held a staged ceremonial event in San Ildefonso to lend Costanza some moral support. Other FMLN mayors on the CDA reported similar experiences where ARENA mayors called on their cell phones to consult with COENA representatives before taking decisions tabled at CDA meetings. FMLN mayors strategically introduced measures that would demonstrate this lack of autonomy in order to enhance their own authority within the CDA.

Table 9.4 Local Political Trends in Paracentral Case Study Municipalities, 1968-2006

	Paracentral Case Study Municipalities			Department	National
	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Jiboa Valley	San Vicente	El Salvador
Political Experience	Hard-line Insurgency	Disputed Zone	Hard-line Count Insurgency		
Political Orientation	FMLN	PDC	ARENA	ARENA	ARENA
2006-2009	FMLN (60.6%)	PCN (44.2%)	ARENA (41.7%)	FMLN (34.5%)	ARENA
2004 Pres. Election	FMLN	ARENA	ARENA	ARENA	ARENA (60%)
2003 -2006	FMLN (63%)	PCN (56%)	ARENA/PCN	PCN (44%)	ARENA (44%)
2000 -2003	FMLN (66%)	PCN (39%)	ARENA (35%)	ARENA (42%)	ARENA (42%)
1999 Pres. Election	FMLN (60%)	ARENA (48%)	ARENA (60%)	ARENA (53%)	ARENA (52%)
1997-2000	FMLN (64%)	ARENA (52%)	ARENA (39%)	ARENA (40%)	ARENA (37%)
1994-1997	FMLN (47%)	PDC (48%)	ARENA (54%)	ARENA (47%)	ARENA (49%)
1991-1994	ARENA (59%)	PDC (56%)	ARENA (47%)	ARENA (46%)	ARENA (45%)
1989 Pres. Election	ARENA (57%)	PDC (45%)	ARENA (61%)	ARENA (54%)	ARENA (54%)
1988-1991	ARENA (54%)	PDC (52%)	ARENA (51%)	ARENA (47%)	ARENA ()
1985-1988	PDC (52%)	PDC (59%)	PDC (50%)	PDC (53%)	PDC (53%)
1984 Pres. Election	ARENA (49%)	PCN (34%)	PCN/PDC(31%)	PDC/AREN(35%)	PDC (43%)
1982-1985	ARENA	PCN	PDC	PDC	Provisional Junta
1979 Appointment					Provisional Junta
1977 Election (M)	PCN			PCN	PCN
1972 Election (M)	PCN			PCN	PCN
1970 Election (M)	PCN			PCN	PCN
1968 Election (M)	PCN			PDC	PCN

The conservative base of ARENA, particularly among the coffee communities of Guadalupe, has long held the upper hand in local politics throughout the Jiboa Valley. Even at its peak, the PDC could barely edge out ARENA in local races. Despite its steady decline, the PDC has rotated with ARENA in Verapáz, San Cayetano and Nuevo Tepetitán. As the former PDC base has shifted toward the FMLN in each of the latter two towns, FMLN candidates have won two out of the last three local races. Still, the FMLN has attracted no more than 25% of the overall regional vote.

The Jiboa Valley has also had its share of two and three term mayors, but Juan Cerritos is in a class by himself having serving seven terms as mayor of Guadalupe. First elected on an ARENA/PCN coalition ticket in 1985, Cerritos prides himself as a wartime mayor that has sustained levels of electoral support comparable to the FMLN in Tecoluca. It was only when COENA intervened to insist on an alternate candidate that Cerritos did not run in 2000. However, unable to ascend within the party, Cerritos ran with the PCN in 2003 and has won twice.

These divisions within ARENA at the local level and the decline in support for ARENA in general are attributable, in the view of Bezaleel Rivera, *sindico* in Guadalupe and 1999 Presidential campaign manager for ARENA in San Vicente, to the authoritarian imposition of candidates by party elites in several places. “Many ARENA supporters punished the party by not voting.”⁹²⁶ Part of the punishment was multiparty competition. Within the Jiboa Valley Microregion between 1991 and 2003, Cerritos was challenged to explore consensus on regional development policies with a two term PDC mayor from Verapáz, Orlando Paredes a farmer from the cantón of Molineros, a two term ARENA colleague from San Cayetano, Pedro Arcenio Hernandez (1994-2000), a truck driver in a local family business, and Jose Evanol Funes, an ex-combatant, Finatero and two-term FMLN mayor from Nuevo Tepetitán.

Despite these recent political openings, local politics remains quite traditional in the Jiboa Valley. When surveyed about prior vote preferences in the 1997 elections, over two in five deferred their responses by emphasizing that their vote was secret. This level of discretion was significantly higher than Tecoluca (33%) and San Ildefonso (31%) and indicates the differences in the perceived freedom of political expression. Among the twelve Jiboa Valley council members, only two are women (17%).

2. Inter-Municipal Cooperation: the San Vicente Mayor’s Council

Attempts to build a departmental mayors council in San Vicente illustrate how political experiences inform different expectations for the institutions of decentralization. Early in his first term as mayor and prior to NGO interest in municipal coordination, Tecoluca’s mayor independently approached other departmental mayors to coordinate their work. A first meeting was scheduled for November, 1995 in Tecoluca. Shortly before the meeting, García and several council people received death threats if the meeting were to go forward.⁹²⁷ ARENA mayors cancelled their participation after being invited on short notice to visit the U.S. on a USAID

⁹²⁶ Interview, Bezaleel Rivera, *Sindico* and San Vicente ARENA Party chair, Guadalupe, May 9, 1998

⁹²⁷ A representative of FUNDE argues that the meeting was also cancelled because the Tecoluca council was not prepared.

sponsored international training seminar. As in earlier attempts to intimidate Tecolucan officials, COMURES and ISDEM offered no assistance. This initial municipal coordination effort was abandoned.

About a year later, a similar invitation to formalize a departmental mayor's council (CDA) was convened by the more neutral party, the German cooperation program, GTZ-PROMUDE. GTZ made San Vicente CDA a pilot initiative with the goal of socializing best practices of budgeting technique and citizen participation, providing a forum for information sharing and mutual support among the department's thirteen mayors. Funding from Diakonia supported four promoters and contracted FUSAI to provide technical assistance on participatory planning.⁹²⁸

In the first years of the CDA, Tecoluca attempted to set a politically relevant agenda only to see proposals effectively vetoed by ARENA party officials. As only one of two FMLN mayors out of total of thirteen, García recalls being treated with contempt from hard-line ARENA mayors. An early confrontation between the mayor of San Vicente, an ex-school teacher named Santamaria and Tecoluca's García ended the ARENA mayor's practice of presiding over meetings as if the other mayors, even from the same party, were her pupils.⁹²⁹ The electoral gains by the FMLN and the strategic leadership eventually diminished open opposition to FMLN mayors within the council. However, limited autonomy for engagement provided to ARENA mayors effectively precluded any meaningful collective action and reduced the CDA to a poorly attended discussion group.

A central discussion topic was the arcane and contradictory accounting requirements associated with the FODES increase and the reform of FISDL and ISDEM.⁹³⁰ Because FODES was funded by two international loans and national budget resources, new accounting rules established no less than five separate funding sources, each with a unique set of standards.

⁹²⁸ FUSAI facilitating local planning exercises in Guadalupe, San Ildefonso and San Sebastian in 1996, but came under increasing criticism for using Diakonia funding to the CDA to pad administrative expenses with little perceived value added. A 1999 proposal to extend FUSAI's technical assistance contract was roundly rejected by the CDA. Interview, Alberto Monterrosa, GTZ-PROMUDE, March 9, 1999.

⁹²⁹ Interview, Nicolás García. As a damage control measure, ARENA intervened to remove the mayor before her term expired.

⁹³⁰ Based on observation of CDA meetings between April 1998 and March 1999, review of CDA archives, and interviews with participants.

Already low accounting capacity in most municipalities was clearly overwhelmed with the avalanche of new procedures. Delays in processing of FISDL projects undermined the legitimacy of mayors and exacerbated accounting challenges. FISDL blamed understaffing and the poor quality of proposals, suggesting the new requirements would eventually smooth out the inefficiency. FMLN mayors attributed delays to the political involvement by FISDL staff. FMLN critics have also leveled charges of collusion between FISDL and an approved list of contractors to inflate costs and kickback profits.⁹³¹ Despite claims by FISDL officials that their actions were accountable, mayors complained that they exercised little control over significant aspects of the project design and funding allocation process.

FISDL was also attempting to decentralize its operations with the creation of 14 separate offices (FISDL 1999). Employees would be provided relatively generous incentives to relocate, responsibilities would be reduced, and increasing responsibility would be transferred to the local government. If effective, one official claimed, FISDL would no longer need to exist.⁹³² One local development expert suggested that as late as February 2000, FISDL still had a significant backlog of unspent funds from 1998 that had yet to be transferred to the municipal level and that project funding practices had become no more transparent or participatory. The project focus of FISDL continues to resist disappearing and has undermined its mandate to set the local development agenda.⁹³³

In light of the challenges that mayors faced, coordinated actions were essential. However, the minimal achievements by the Vicentian CDA suggest political capture. Indeed, observation of CDA decision making processes revealed the two different empowerment processes at play. FMLN mayors urged collective action by the CDA on political issues where a consensus was possible and attempted to diffuse the focus on any single mayor. Tecoluca tabled

⁹³¹ Interview, Carlos Cortés, March 11, 1999. Cortés recounted a frequently heard complaint, charging that FISDL assesses arbitrary unit cost surcharges for all project materials that are pooled into a line item labeled “indirect costs.” The project cost estimates are shared with contractors, who in turn overbid. Bids are awarded based on loyalty to the bid rigging scheme, and the winning contractor shares the “indirect cost” with FISDL staff. FISDL discretion to alter municipal proposals and the general lack of competition in the construction industry prevents local control.

⁹³² Interview, Roberto Huezo, Patricia Fortín, FISDL, San Salvador, March 18, 1999.

⁹³³ Interview, Guillermo Galvan, FUNDAMUNI, Feb. 15, 2000; This is a central argument in the critique of the Local Development Network of NGOS (RDL, 2003)

proposals for the CDA to address electricity overcharges, to push for a further increase of FODES to 12% of national budget and to have funds go directly to mayors, depoliticization and the decentralization of FISDL and ISDEM, among other contentious issues. García and other FMLN mayors challenged the higher unit prices of FISDL supervised projects compared to those administered directly by local government and criticized the inefficiency of the centralized FISDL operations in the capital.⁹³⁴ The transfer of direct control over contracting professional services to the CDA or to individual local governments was demanded by Tecoluca, challenging the very core of FISDL's operational existence.

García was also instrumental in a meeting between eleven FMLN mayors and Norma de Dowe, then director of FISDL, in 1997 to demand that new representation of FISDL be assigned to their municipalities or the FMLN mayors would demand that FISDL withdraw all representation. The group threatened to publish the demand in a newspaper ad, after which relations improved. GTZ argued that behind the insistence of Tecoluca, one of CDA's few concrete achievements was to force FISDL to deal more directly and impartially with local mayors, although no progress was made on reforming ISDEM.⁹³⁵ In most interventions, FMLN mayors demonstrated ownership of the local development resources channeled through state agencies and attempted to use the CDA to exert greater control over these agencies. Decentralization was being pulled down from below.

ARENA mayors were typically silent on most political demands. Interventions focused instead on individual grievances by municipal governments, saddled with increasing demands but with too few resources or technical assistance to provide any substantive development leadership in their respective communities. Criticism of FISDL emphasized appeals for the expedition of delayed funding proposals rather than institutional reform. Before signing on to any proposed CDA resolution, ARENA mayors consulted closely with party bosses by.⁹³⁶

⁹³⁴ At a Aug 14, 1998 CDA meeting at FISDL offices in San Vicente, Tecoluca officials argued that the costs for a common school construction are double when bid out by FISDL compared to municipal administration. In their defense the FISDL officials argued that the frequency of accounting errors pointed out by audits of CDA-SV municipal accounts suggests that mayors often take procedural shortcuts that lower the final project cost, but also reduce the accountability, thus justifying FISDL supervisory costs. The quality of project administration capacity and accountability mechanisms vary between municipalities.

⁹³⁵ Interview, Dr. Oscar Mena, GTZ-PROMUDE, Dec. 16, 1998 San Salvador

⁹³⁶ Interviews, Nicolás García, 1998; various letters were sent to the COMURES President requesting attention to CDA concerns, including the ISDEM/COENA attacks on San Ildefonso's mayor, clarification on rules governing

Guadalupe's Juan Cerritos, who presided as President of the CDA between 1994 and 1997, argued that that CDA support for FMLN proposals to have 100% of FODES come from the national budget was incorrect because it encroached upon the discretionary powers of the President. San Cayetano's mayor, Arcenio Hernandez praised his town's relations with ISDEM and FISDL, offering only modest criticism of understaffing and procedural delays.⁹³⁷ ARENA mayors demonstrated that empowerment was by invitation only and the conditions were non-negotiable.

San Ildefonso, which suffered from considerable deficit in technical capacity, was absent from nearly half of the observed CDA meetings and offered little substantive input. The participation by FMLN and ARENA mayors in CDA fora provide one illustration of the competing empowerment strategies at play. Voluntary term limits, proactive coordination, politically oriented collective action, and contentious demands for expanded local autonomy contrast sharply with perennial candidacies, reactive or defensive engagement with opposition mayors, emphasis on individual needs and subservient acquiescence to the party line on political advocacy.

In addition to the phenomena of multi-term mayors, some analysts have pointed to the deficiencies in local representation due to the growing number of municipal governments that take local office despite winning a relatively low share of the overall vote. Since 1994, the number of Salvadoran mayors and councils (elected together in winner take all vote) that have been elected with more than 50% of the local vote declined from 94 out of 262, to 68 in 2000. The number elected with more than 33% of the vote declined from 162 to 147. Municipal governments elected with less than 33% of the local vote increased from 5 in 1994 to 47 in 2000. Political reforms that enact some form of proportional representation on municipal councils have been promoted by USAID and NGOs to remedy the risks that growing abstention may reflect diminished sense of representation in local government.

In the twenty four local elections held in the case study municipalities since 1994, on only one occasion (Verapáz, 2000) has a mayor and council been elected with less than 33%.

use of municipal funds, improved regulation of excessive electricity charges, and FODES reforms. FMLN and GTZ insistence is largely responsible for these actions, for which COMURES offered no concrete response.

⁹³⁷ Interview, Juan Cerritos and Arcenio Hernandez, Guadalupe and San Cayetano mayors, March 11, 1999, San Vicente

However, in half, support fell below the 50%. Although proportional representation on the municipal councils is a laudable goal, it is not likely to be among the most significant challenges to making decentralization work. Would new, imposed legal requirements achieve what deeply rooted and exclusionary patron client relations have long and effectively resisted?

The analysis so far suggests otherwise. Nothing prevents local actors from exploring mechanisms for greater participation and accountability, yet most do not because their constituents do not expect them to. Variation in the assigned roles, interests and performance of these local actors in local governance depends to a greater degree on the underlying aggregate political experiences and their associated empowerment strategies. Decentralization tends to strengthen the distribution of power that exists a priori at the local level – an argument that will be illustrated by a comparison of how the available opportunities for decentralized development have been used differently.

C. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL CASES

1. Comparison of Local Institutional Fields

Figures I.1, I.2 and I.3 (located in the Appendix) represent the range of local development institutions that have been present in the three municipal case studies in the post-war period prior to 1999.⁹³⁸ Included are the key governmental and non-governmental organizations that each municipal government has identified as supporting or implementing some aspect of local development. A comparison of these institutional maps reveals striking differences in **organizational density, ideological diversity, and transnational reach**. For each, the

⁹³⁸ The communities, organizations, gremios, government agencies represented in these maps is compiled from a variety of sources, but primarily interviews with municipal council members, the regional survey, a review of the organizational literature. The proportionate weight in terms of funding or membership is not reflected, and some of the identified organizations were present in the early 1990s, but have since left. Late 1998 was used as a time cutoff due to the influx of new organizations after Hurricane Mitch, so the maps do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the current institutional presence in these three areas.

expansion of local institutions has posed different coordination challenges. This section summarizes the observations drawn from the three institutional maps and then describes the primary effort to coordinate institutions in each case.

a. Organizational density

In Tecoluca (Figure I.1) the institutional field is clearly the most crowded. The lowered institutional presence of specific state agencies is offset by large numbers of NGOs, INGOs and gremios. By comparison, these organizations are relatively absent in San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley. Table 9.5 lists the most frequently identified NGOs in 1998 Paracentral Survey. Clearly, NGOs are far more visible to respondents in Tecoluca than anywhere else (100 of 155 respondents), 51 of 119 in San Ildefonso and surprisingly only 1 on 5 respondents in the Jiboa Valley could identify an NGO. With the exception of HIBASA/PCI – a European Union financed water service program that in the case of San Ildefonso was partnering with a U.S. based INGO but was present in many communities, the most noted NGOs vary for each case study municipality (CORDES in Tecoluca, Habitat for Humanity in the Jiboa Valley and ASDI in San Ildefonso) tend to specialize in one or a few municipalities.⁹³⁹ The list includes both Donor NGOs (INGOs, CARE, Habitat, HIBASA/Project Concern Intl), as well as Salvadoran NGOs and one producer cooperative federation (Fedecoopades).

In San Ildefonso, beyond ASDI, and the U.S. INGO, Project Concern International, the institutional field reflects a lack of interest by both FMLN and ARENA mobilization networks. Arevalo's CNC and several internationally funded programs (PRODAP, HIBASA potable water project) are present in only a handful of communities. Similarly, the Jiboa Valley counts very few NGOs beyond FundaGuadalupe and Habitat for Humanity International. The relative absence of these programs has increased community dependence on municipal or central government programs for investment in local development. FUSAI is the only NGO that is present in all three municipal case studies, due to the technical assistance provided to CDA councils and small infrastructure projects in various communities.

⁹³⁹ HIBASA-PCI was an EU-U.S. INGO consortium working on water in dozens of municipalities.

Table 9.5 NGOs most frequently identified in paracentral region (1998 survey)

			Total	Jiboa Valley	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Other
1. Hibasa/PCI	Water	INGO	53	1	5	21	17
2. CORDES	Production	NGO	37		37		
3. Habitat for Humanity	Housing	INGO	23	18			5
4. FUSAI	Housing	NGO	21		12		9
5. ASDI	Production	NGO	23			13	10
6. FUNDASAL	Infrastructure	NGO	14		4	2	8
7. FEDECOOPADES	Production	Coop gremio	10		8		2
8. CARE	Water/credit	INGO	10				10
9. FUNDE	Research Training	NGO	9		1		8
10. Fundacion Guadalupe	Infrastructure	NGO	8	5			3
11. IBBE Bautista	Credit	gremio	8				8
Other NGOs			75	4	33	10	153
Don't recall name			32	3	8	5	16
Total NGOs identified			323	31	100	51	141

b. Ideological diversity

Perhaps two thirds of the 20 plus NGOs and many more INGOs working Tecoluca are considered strategic allies that share much of local development philosophy. However, a significant number of centrist INGOs and NGOs can also be found working in non-FMLN communities (Santa Cruz, San Nicolás, ISTA cooperatives) and operate for the most part independently of the local planning and advocacy processes. World Vision, for example, is an INGO that has relationships with five communities all of which are less closely associated with the FMLN.

As illustrated in the case of ASDI and the CDD in San Ildefonso, the ideological diversity between the mayor, most NGOs and gremios has prevented any collaboration. Neither has the relative political homogeneity of local organizations has not translated into significant coordination in the Jiboa Valley.

Over fifteen gremios are present to varying extents in Tecoluca, representing a wide range of local issues and interests. Gremios represent a wide variety of local interests, including landed and landless producers (FEDECOOPADES, CDD, ANTA), community leaders (CRIPDES), women (MAM, ASMUR), war wounded (ASALDIG), and a savings and loan members (TECOOP). The *Coordinadora del Bajo Lempa* (lower Lempa valley Coordinator) formed in 1995 to advocate for long term solutions to constant inundation in the Lempa valley flood plains. A few gremios from the center-right are also present in Tecoluca, although the balance clearly favors support for the FMLN. Again, in both San Ildefonso and Jiboa Valley, the density of advocacy gremios is less and in the latter case, limited to center-right producer organizations.

Government ministries are present in every institutional field, but ideological differences with FMLN government in Tecoluca hinders close coordination. At one extreme, DIDECO, a community development agency of the Ministry of Interior, supports political organizing in open competition with the FMLN in the town center and several cantónes with populations historically associated with ARENA. In San Cayetano, Guadalupe and San Ildefonso, municipal council members also serve as DIDECO promoters. State health, education and agriculture officials are also reluctant to proactively coordinate with the FMLN government in Tecoluca.

c. Transnational reach

INGOs in Tecoluca channel as much as \$1-2 million annually through local NGOs, cooperatives and community organizations. Perhaps just as importantly, these international organizations act as a bridge between national mobilization networks in Tecoluca and Northern policymakers and constituent groups. To take one of the more prominent examples, the SHARE Foundation has been a catalyst in transnational advocacy initiatives involving Tecoluca communities around the issues of land transfer, agrarian debt, flood infrastructure and lobbying for increased bilateral cooperation. In addition to channeling significant resources into Tecoluca through direct project funding and several sister city or sister parish relations, the SHARE Foundation has facilitated solidarity and brought international political pressure to bear at strategic moments in local advocacy campaigns.

In contrast, linkages to Europe or the U.S. in San Ildefonso are mediated by itinerant politicians like Orlando Arevalo, and in the Jiboa Valley by ARENA party officials, bilateral donors like GTZ and USAID, or through the individual transfer of remittances in both places.

2. Local institutional performance and coordination

How do the services provided by NGOs and relationships with communities compare to those of municipal government or agencies of the central government in the eyes of the case study municipality residents? Figure 9.2 compares an NGO performance evaluation index composed of four questions about people's assessment of their treatment engaging each institution, the quality of services provided, the perceived interest level that each has in citizen's participation in the resolution of local problems, and who the beneficiaries are for NGO projects.⁹⁴⁰

The results are presented for the most frequently identified NGOs. For a scale of 0-10, most NGOs perform well above average (5.0). The survey mean for NGO performance is 7.6, and INGOs are typically rated higher while local NGOs (ASDI, FUSAI, CORDES) receive below average evaluations.

It is surprising that these local NGOs are the most frequently recognized and have had the longest presence in the communities, yet are the most heavily criticized. INGOs, whose roots in the communities are not as deep, are viewed more positively. To take one illustrative example of this divergence, a third of all respondents that identified CORDES (12 of 37), argued that the work of the NGO benefits exclusively its own employees.

⁹⁴⁰ Scores are the mean evaluation score for the four questions converted to a scale of 0-10. See appendix for complete question wording (Questions 3.10-3.12, 4.6-4.8, 5.7-5.10). The means of each evaluation are based on an N that varies from a low of 27 to a high of 150 within the case study municipalities. The scale for each question runs from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

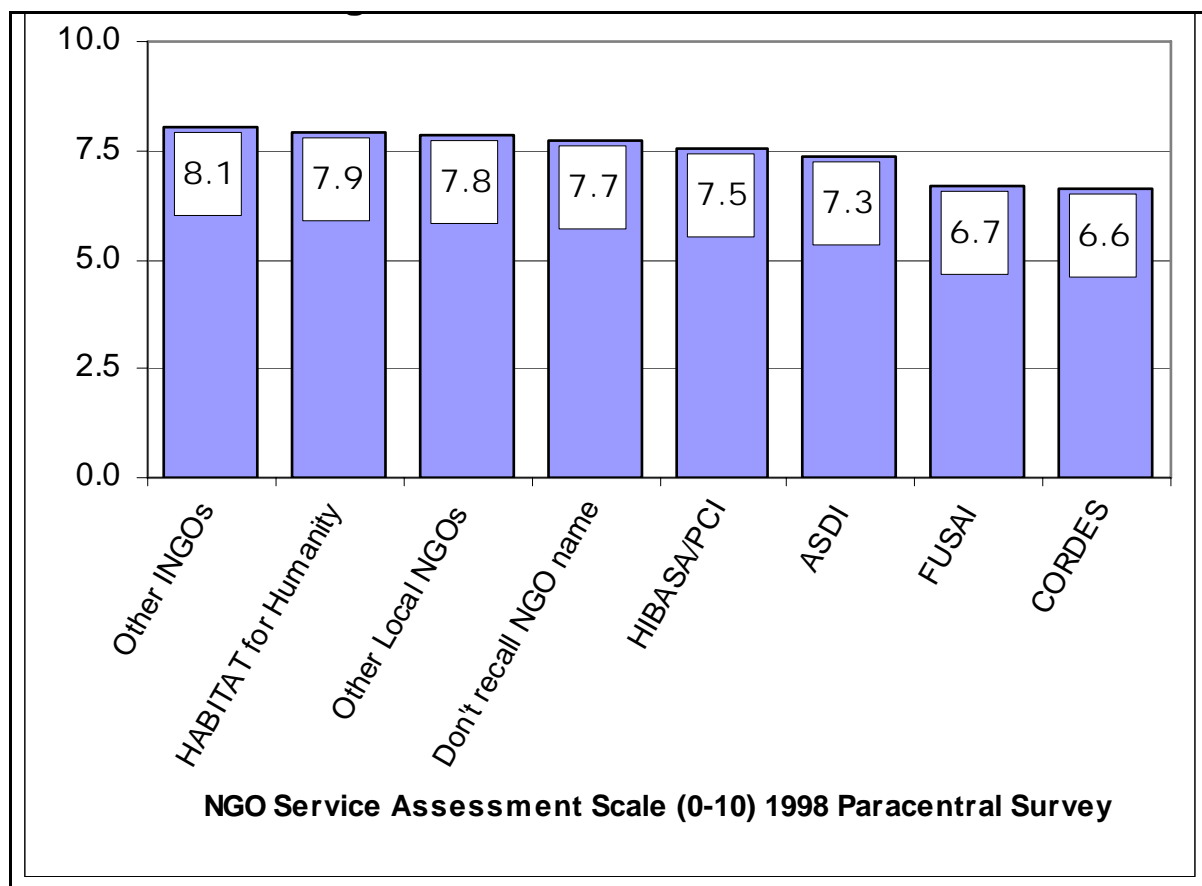


Figure 9.2 Mean Performance Scores for various NGOs present in the Paracentral Region

In Figure 9.3, an index of three indicators of the quality of services provided by the municipal and central government is compared with that provided by NGOs.⁹⁴¹ First, it is important to note that almost 80% of the survey respondents could name their mayor, 46% could name their legislative representative, but only 31% could name their local council delegate and 32% could identify an NGO. Second, it is worth adding that only between 16% and 26% reported engaging the NGO, municipal government or central government agency for some service. So, there is a large gap between those who are informed about or active in engaging institutions working at the local level.

⁹⁴¹ For the cross institutional comparisons of performance, only a three question scale is used, excluding the last question about beneficiaries.

Figure 9.3 compares institutional evaluation in the three municipal case studies. The overall performance (treatment, level of participation, quality of services) of NGOs is ranked much higher than local government or central government agencies. The gap between NGO performance and local government or central government performance is greatest in San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley, where the fewest NGOs are actually working. The assessed performance of local government is highest in Tecoluca, the only institutional evaluation difference that is statistically significant. In Tecoluca, the evaluation gap between NGOs and

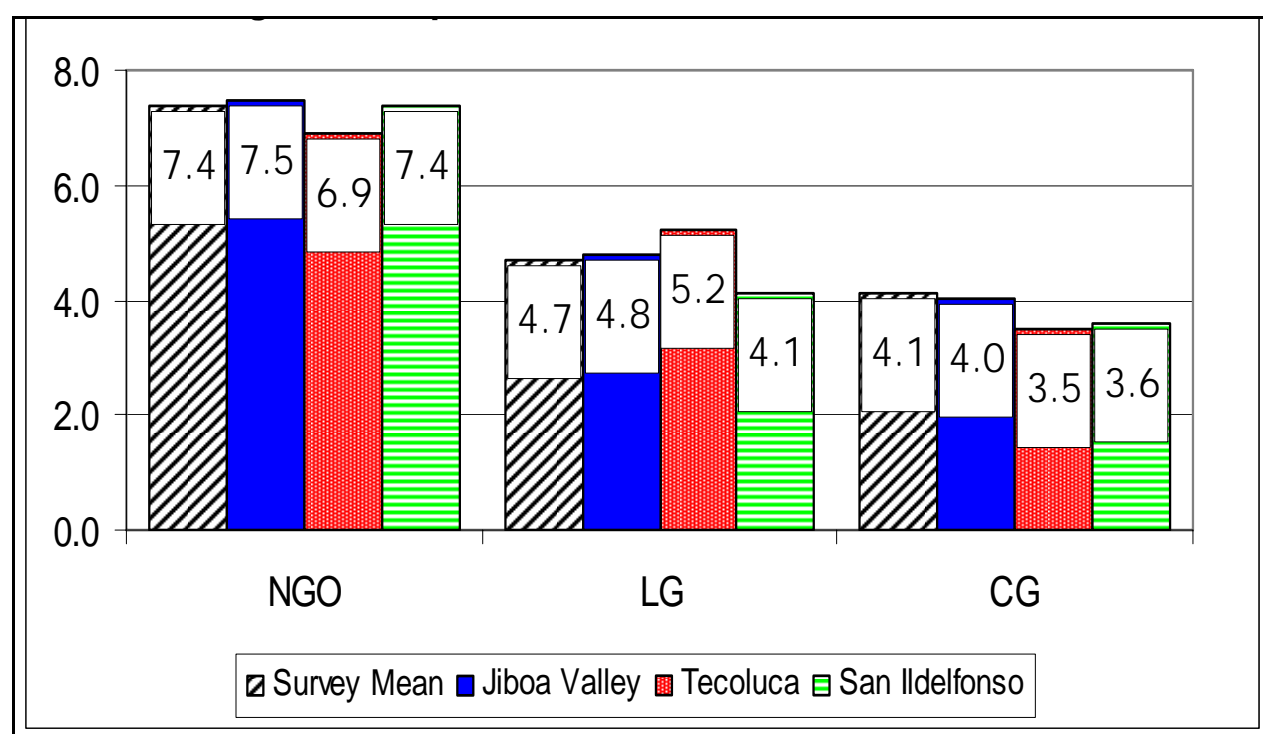


Figure 9.3 Composite Evaluation of Local Institutions

local government is the smallest. The non-significant difference between NGO and INGO evaluations is surprising given the preponderant influence that NGOs have in Tecoluca, versus their relative absence in Jiboa Valley. This association between the relative weight of NGOs in duration and density of their presence with the subjective assessment of their performance suggests that criticism of NGOs may be increasing over time. The smaller gap between NGO and

local government performance in Tecoluca may also represent the improvement in municipal services.

In all three cases, government services (health, education, infrastructure, FISDL, and agricultural extension) are rated the lowest, although in San Ildefonso there is little difference between perceived performance of local government and national government. Nine out of ten report that the projects of NGOs benefit the poor or everyone, while on one in five say the same for government services. Figure 9.3 also tells us that many local needs are not being met, but within the range of local service providers, NGOs are viewed most positively.⁹⁴²

Figure 9.4 compares another indicator of confidence in institutions. Respondents were asked to rate the level of confidence they held for each institution (none, little, some much). Here again NGOs rate near the top (3.1 compared to a maximum of 4). Only the Catholic Church is worthy of greater trust – a reminder of the tremendous and unrivaled influence that this institution enjoys among the Salvadoran population. Most state institutions and political parties rank near the bottom, marking a severe depletion of democratic support as the expectations associated with the post-war period become aligned with a disappearing reality.⁹⁴³ Local government is viewed favorably by comparison.

⁹⁴² An UCA survey in July 1997 reported that nearly two in three feel that their interests are not being represented by their local municipal government, although 50% said that they had benefited from projects implemented by their local government, reported in *Proceso*, 775, Sept. 24, 1997.

⁹⁴³ Latinobarometer and USAID surveys have shown the steady decline in confidence for political institutions in most of Latin America since the “third wave” of democracy peaked in the mid-1990s. Seligson and Córdova (1999) have shown that one troubling effect in El Salvador is the surprisingly high approval for a coup d’état.

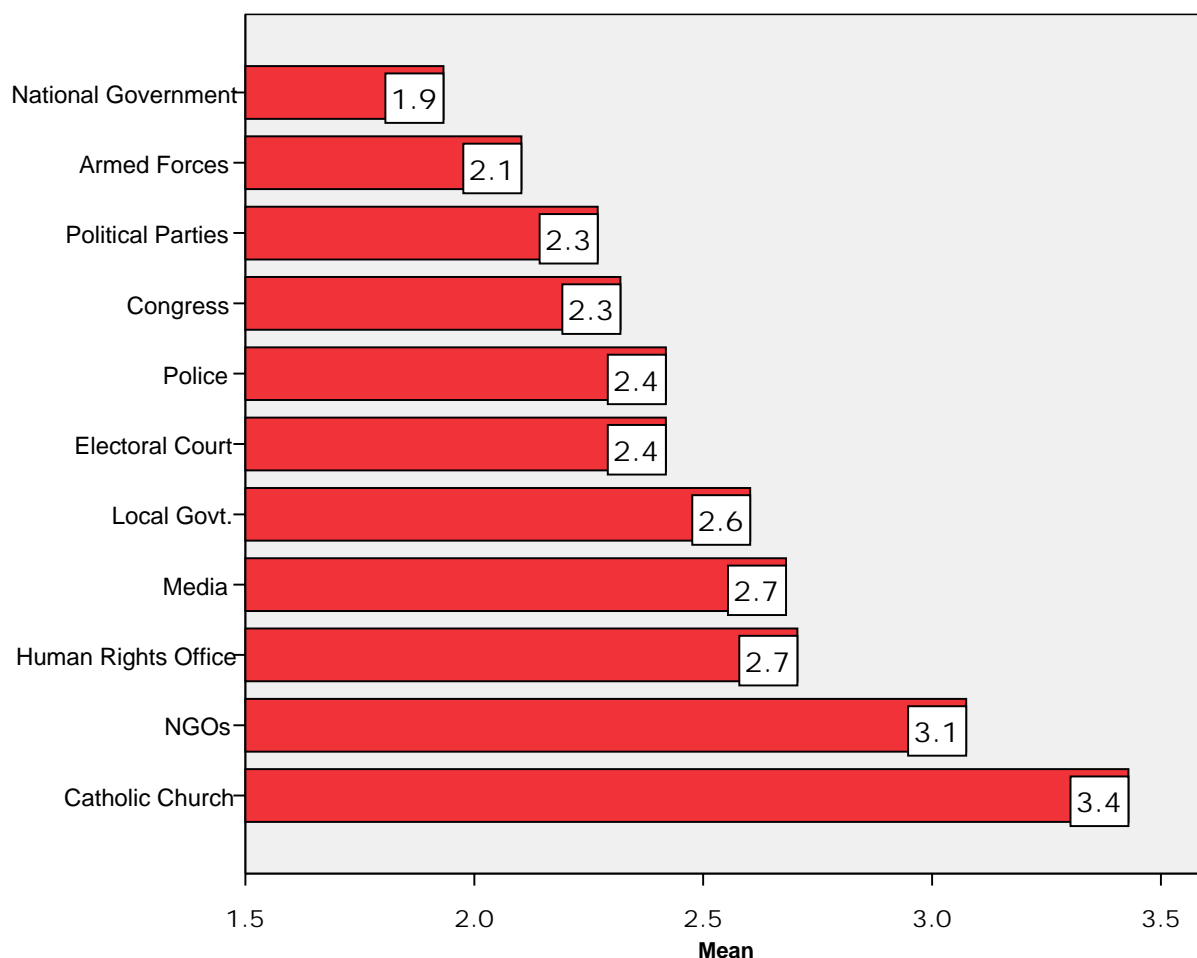


Figure 9.4 Institutional Trust

3. Local Coordination Spaces

While the evidence on institutional evaluation underscores general disapproval of government institutions, not all local development actors are viewed similarly. From the institutional maps, we know that NGOs have concentrated in ex-combatant re-integration areas such as Tecoluca, although this phenomenon presents costs as well as benefits. Over saturation in coverage by NGOs and poor coordination with municipal governments has contributed to competition for beneficiaries and the poor execution of projects. Other areas are completely neglected feeding

the perception of unequal distribution of local resources. Where organizational density would appear to offer an advantage to the lack of state services (Tecoluca), the performance of local institutions is somewhat uneven. Local government performance is ranked highest, but the views are more critical toward NGOs – particularly those that have worked in the communities the longest. More NGOs don't necessarily translate into better performance and greater civic engagement. Conversely, where NGOs are the most scarce, the performance is assessed more positively. In areas with few NGOs, the novel presence of a single new project can invite disproportionately more activity among local counterparts.⁹⁴⁴ The coordination problems and competition between local institutions may prevent the conversion of this social capital into the expected empowerment achievements. Each municipal case has attempted to address internal coordination differently and these mechanisms are assessed in the next section.

Early in the post-war period, various initiatives attempted to better coordinate the design, planning, implementation and control of the local reconstruction and development process. What are now referred to generally as Local Development Committees were inaugurated in three municipalities governed by the FMLN in 1994 (Nejapa, Cinquera and Tecoluca). However, the starting points for these processes can be traced to opposition NGO demands for greater voice in local decision making under ARENA mayors as early as 1992.

One study that compares the Local Development Committee experience since 1994, Rodríguez has identified some 85 distinct initiatives Rodríguez (2005: 60). Over half are located in FMLN municipalities, although 33 are found in ARENA or PCN municipalities as well. For the most part, these efforts to coordinate local development actors and explore participatory budgeting at the municipal level depended upon the support of an NGO. Only 60% of the initial CDL efforts continue to actually function with any regularity, with a considerable number stalled when a mayor from a different party is elected. In only 20% of the CDL cases where the municipal government has changed hands to a new party, have the CDL mechanisms continued to function. Even within FMLN municipal governments where internal divisions have generated *renovador* and *ortodoxo* candidates, the local coordination mechanism has faltered.⁹⁴⁵

⁹⁴⁴ For example, the strong response to Habitat for Humanity in the Jiboa Valley and Project Concern International in San Ildefonso is not consistent with either organization's interest in addressing the structural problems in the respective municipalities.

⁹⁴⁵ Rodríguez (2005: 104) points to the examples of Soyapango, Apopa, San Marcos and Jiquilisco.

A large percentage of Salvadoran municipalities are too small and vulnerable to actually be viable administrative entities. Microregions of contiguous municipalities have been promoted to reduce the unsustainable costs of an obsolete political administrative structure. Microregions are defined as “the process of free association of neighboring, connected municipalities in the function areas of access routes, environment, economic patrimony, cultural traits, and the presence of social processes through which citizens and local governments express their will to associate in order to promote common projects and initiate a *mancomunal* (shared) development” (RDL 2003: 192). El Salvador now counts 53 efforts to establish micro-regions affecting over 40% of the municipalities, with some belonging to as many as three different ones (MOP/IBERINSA 2002; RDL 2003, chapter 6). The depth and scope of these initiatives varies considerably, but most have focused on more efficient service provision, zoning and territorial planning, environmental risk management, and economic development. The proliferation of municipal association is often responsive to donor funding and has deepened the debate over the most appropriate revision to the current political administrative system.

Unlike the Tecoluca (CDM) or the Jiboa Valley Micro-region, no municipal or regional coordination initiative took root in San Ildefonso. Comparison of municipal coordination or planning efforts will be limited to the first two cases and focus on the diversity of participants, the scope of discussion, the strategies considered and the likely sustainability of the process.

a. Tecoluca: The Municipal Development Council (CDM)⁹⁴⁶

Early in the post-war period, improved coordination was identified as one of the keys to reaching the municipality’s development potential. Many NGOs, INGOs and gremios were present in Tecoluca, and the duplication of effort was criticized. According to a municipal document, “One of the principal problems that confronts the Municipal Council to promote local development is the lack of a strategy to take advantage of the potential, as with the weak articulation between governmental and non-governmental organizations that operate in the municipality” (Tecoluca (1997b: 4). The CDM emerged as a way of better coordinating local action and improving

⁹⁴⁶ This section is based on participant observation of five CDM meetings from March 1998 to April 1999, interviews with the principal NGO facilitators (FUNDE, GTZ-Promude, SHARE Foundation), as well as meeting minutes, action plans and funding proposals.

planning. It was also viewed as a transparency mechanism, in the words of one municipal official, ‘to respond to people’s right to know what is going on.’

With the support of an NGO, FUNDE, the CDM process began in 1995. CDM goals included improved coordination by those institutions already in Tecoluca and filling the gaps where coverage was lacking. Early meetings were attended by a relatively wide range of actors in Tecoluca, including centrist INGOs, various ministerial representatives, DIDECO promoters, and ISDEM. In addition to as many as ten local NGOs, early planning meetings also counted on INGO and gremio representatives. Attendance initially was both extensive and politically diverse – a rare accomplishment.

However, over a period of three years the CDM did little more than convene meetings, facilitate exchange of information about ongoing work in the municipality and attempt to formalize a complex organizational structure. The process bogged down in its complexity and participation declined. The proposed structure rested on a general assembly, in which every sector, governmental and non-governmental alike, would have representation. Prior to 1997, participation was limited to institutional representatives, perhaps the principal reason why the process delivered so few concrete results. To incorporate more direct citizen participation, sectoral assemblies (production, infrastructure, organization, health and education, and women) were convened for the first time in 1998 to coordinate ongoing projects and an Executive Committee (expected to meet monthly) was elected in June of that year to supervise the entire process.⁹⁴⁷

A conflict emerged with the involvement of GTZ-Promude, another INGO that was also providing technical assistance to Tecoluca, among other San Vicente municipal governments, to improve local planning, citizen participation and accountability. GTZ and FUNDE disputed the optimal objectives and structure of the CDM. GTZ pushed for a simpler and more practical focus on improving the responsiveness of city council directly to geographic districts, and resisted the establishment of sectoral assemblies of the CDM process as excessively cumbersome and an unproductive use of time. FUNDE and other proponents of the sectoral structure responded that coordination limited to geographic space would artificially narrow the discussion to the fixed menu of social infrastructure to which most town meetings have been reduced, and

⁹⁴⁷ Technical working groups (representatives of specialized institutions) would also be convened as needed.

provide no incentive for NGOs to coordinate their work with other institutions. The situation was complicated further by the challenge of reconciling the complex and expansive organizational structure that CORDES was promoting in the south with the comparable absence of institutional protagonism in other sectors, such as the cluster of communities located on the volcano.

While the theoretical debate over the most effective and appropriate coordinating space proceeded, institutions were free to pursue their preferred model within Tecoluca. In part due to the competition for naming and controlling zones of conflict during the war, competition between GTZ, FUNDE, CORDES, the municipal government and other local initiatives contributed to the confusion about the appropriate territorial zoning terminology in the post-war period. The term microregion has been used to describe multiple municipalities as well as subsections of a single municipality. Excessive organization, overlapping jurisdictions, too many meetings, and insufficient follow through, left the communities exhausted and reluctant to participate.⁹⁴⁸ Tecoluca's over attention to the design of participatory mechanisms contributed to excessive and duplicative organizational structures with inadequate capacity of assemblies to execute.

Still, this competition did not degenerate into conflict or derail the process. Despite a shift in political leadership from a *renovador* to an *ortodoxo* mayor in 2000, several factors have facilitated the continuity of Tecoluca's CDM process and set it apart from other coordination spaces. Tecoluca's municipal coordination efforts have undoubtedly improved local governance and strengthened the capacity of the municipal council. Evidence of this is the retention of support for the process itself as well as funding for the concrete and ambitious projections for local development that have been consulted widely and are in sync with municipal town meetings. Projects that emerged in the CDM process include an pre-investment fund for investment feasibility studies, a restaurant and hotel services training program, an ecological park, and the placement of the regional branch office of the state justice ministry. This capacity to coordinate efficiently has also been a factor in the effective lifesaving and reconstruction response to natural disasters that has also been widely recognized. The movement to demand

⁹⁴⁸ UNDP (2003) cites the National Development Commission and other regarding the lack of coordination or rationalization about territorial planning.

flood prevention infrastructure in the Lower Lempa region and collaboration with the IDB can be traced to the CDM.

Participation in the CDM has fluctuated, but has nevertheless included community leaders, INGO and NGO directors, and government representatives at the local level. The debates are vibrant and clearly demonstrate a capacity and confidence to criticize and receive criticism about perceived institutional deficiencies. For example, CORDES and SES were challenged by communities in the north to account for why resources appeared to be concentrated in the south. In turn, these NGOs and others were forced to explain and justify their projected work in the municipality, but challenged other institutions to reciprocate as well. Whether the responses were satisfactory or not, the CDM permitted unprecedented accountability and transparency that grounded perceptions of institutional performance and substantiated planning processes. No local authority was considered “endiosado.” The CDM in Tecoluca represents one of the few local coordination mechanisms where women have held 50% of the governing board positions and despite fluctuating participation it continues to exist a decade after it began (Rodriguez 2005: 99).

Despite a constructive climate where peasant leaders openly criticized endless analysis and insistence on results by NGO representatives, the coordination debate did not get lost, in the words of one participant, “in looking to place blame on local institutional weaknesses by forgetting to make demands of those who have a greater duty for local development. There are problems that NGOs can’t solve and the utopia of a better future is one without NGOs because sufficient capacity for self-governance has been achieved.”⁹⁴⁹ The CDM was not expected by participants to meet the basic needs of the municipal population, but to better manage the additional power won through decentralization to force the state to meet its obligations.

As a result, discussion centered on the correct balance in the allocation of energy and resources between local analysis, initiatives or fundraising and political advocacy. Poverty and unemployment were clearly defined as the municipality’s core challenges and structural as well as the local obstacles were identified as targets for community action. This assignment of economic development responsibilities to local government is rare, given the narrow counter-insurgent expectations still dominant for most mayors. However, the CDM process reinforced

⁹⁴⁹ Intervention by Emilio Espín, regional director CORDES, CDM Meeting, March 1998, Tecoluca.

the view that full responsibility for local economic development was not placed exclusively with local actors, but reserved a significant amount of attention to demanding that the state fulfill its responsibility to rural communities.

Finally, the proposed action strategies ranged from conventional actions (fundraising, lobbying, capacity building, strategic alliances, consultation) to contentious advocacy (mobilization strategies to oppose contamination of organic crops by air fumigation of cotton and sugar, protest marches to publicize demands for infrastructure and road repair equipment, advocacy capacity building investments). Local community and NGO representatives argued that confrontational actions were both necessary and legitimate to ensure that Tecoluca's needs are heard. INGO representatives typically voiced caution about the risk of alienating potential allies (or donors). Despite these tensions and unresolved challenges to local coordination, even critical observers of the CDM process praise it as one of the most advanced municipal consultative processes in Central America.⁹⁵⁰

b. Microregion Jiboa Valley⁹⁵¹

The Jiboa Valley microregion was one of the first efforts to resolve the non-viability of local municipal governance in small towns (UNDP 2003: 211, Map 7.3). The process is complex from both a technical and political standpoint and reflects the profound obstacles to decentralized decision making that exist in settings of high inequality. Conceptually, the microregion would preserve the autonomy of each of the four municipal governments, but establish agreements to coordinate in the areas where individual municipal administration was clearly ineffective. Jiboa Valley municipalities came together at the urging of GTZ, motivated by the potential benefits of coordination in terms of job creation in tourism, horticulture, infrastructure, and communal organization as well as savings from cost sharing in the more efficient provision of services (water, sanitation, solid waste). Job creation rested largely upon the diversification of agriculture

⁹⁵⁰ Interview, Dr. Oscar Mena, GTZ Local Development Director, Dec. 1998

⁹⁵¹ This section is based on participant observation in five Microregion Meetings between May 1998 and April 1999, plus interviews with mayors, NGOs and GTZ-Promude staff. Little relevant documentation was available.

to alternative industries such as cut flowers, craft production and promotion of the region's tourism potential. The top attraction is the *infiernillo* ("hot springs") perched high up on the volcano and offering spectacular views of the valley and surrounding landscape. In both cases, the goal definition was heavily influenced by the visible success of Alfredo Cristiani, whose frequent commute by helicopter to his own chalet was a constant reminder (or illusion) that economic development was within reach.

Beginning in 1997, the micro-region planning process was led by GTZ-Promude, and included participants from the municipal councils of each of the four municipalities, various members of the Fundacion Guadalupe, ISDEM and FISDL. The micro-region diagnosis process identified unemployment and lack of basic services as the principal problems. As in the CDM of Tecoluca, early participation was limited to institutional representatives, excluding ADESCO leaders, other NGOs or gremios. The debate about how to consult with the communities on a shared development plan, as in Tecoluca, raised many questions about the appropriate organizational structure. FundaGuadalupe and GTZ-Promude favored a mechanism that represented the microregion with a cross-section of ADESCO leaders, council members and other institutional representatives. Most mayors and council representatives expressed anxiety about additional responsibilities or accountability beyond their respective *cabildo abiertos*.

Among the representatives of the municipal governments, community participation was treated as an imposed cost on the flexibility of decision making rather than a legitimating mechanism or even a source of higher quality decisions. At one point in this debate a San Cayetano councilperson cited the municipal code to argue that *cabildos* only require designated community leaders to be convened four times per year, not the entire community. Consequently, the micro-region should not hold them to a higher standard. Another mayor added that even these standards are interpreted by most mayors as an imposition that is taken seriously only because the Comptroller General can withhold transfers unless the requirement is fulfilled. "What would happen," asked one mayor, "if we convened the people and they decided that they didn't agree with the priorities of the microregion?" The discussion hastily backed away from this precipice. Not surprisingly, INGO and NGO expectations that mayors would recruit local leaders to participate in microregion planning meetings were unmet.

FundaGuadalupe was the principal NGO and a driving force in the coordination process, conveying strategic information about funding opportunities as well as extensive contacts and

leverage with potential institutional allies for the microregion. However, the Foundation's perception of local needs as "small, simple and requiring little effort to fulfill," forced them to moderate their ambitious vision for the transformation of the Jiboa Valley.⁹⁵² This paternalist view of local political culture, accurate or not, further restricted participation in the planning process.

In the few instances that communities were informed about microregion planning efforts, little demand for increased participation was forthcoming. Throughout the Jiboa Valley, there persists a perception among many that organizing is a necessary evil that is likely to bring as many problems as benefits.

This local reputation for individualism became notorious following the 1995 crash of a Guatemalan AVIATECA airliner into the volcano after it drifted off-course attempting to land during an evening storm killing all aboard. The crash site was located near the cantón of San Emigdio, just a short distance to the west of Alfredo Cristiani's home. Authorities were delayed in arriving to the crash site until the following morning, but by then the remains of the crash had been thoroughly looted by the surrounding communities. The plane's flight recorder box, among other valuables scavenged among the wreckage, had been stolen and held for a ransom from the airline company.⁹⁵³ In addition to the persistent poverty that led to the desperate pillaging of a crash site, this incident also underscored the predatory individualism that prevails in the absence of any authentic social organization.

The reluctance to open the decision making space to a broader cross-section of the Jiboa Valley residents, despite the insistence of the GTZ facilitator, replicated the top-down preferences of Jiboa Valley leaders. No representatives of producer organizations, community gremios, or women from the communities were active participants in the micro-region design process. Commitments by mayors to integrate the microregion planning process into *cabildo abierto* meetings were routinely ignored.

⁹⁵² Interview, FundaGuadalupe official, 1998.

⁹⁵³ AVIATECA (now TACA and one of the principal representatives of the modernizing faction within ARENA) desperately searched for the black box to reinforce its legal protection from insurance claims for indemnification of the victim's families by attributing the crash to pilot error. Based on local accounts, after some confusion the black box was purchased from a local farmer although the company has never publicly acknowledged finding it.

Past competition between the four municipal governments was another obstacle to microregion coordination. Recent efforts to coordinate local service provision have resulted in deepening divisions and distrust among Jiboa Valley communities, rather than bringing them closer together. One example involves water, perhaps the single most serious unmet basic need in the Jiboa Valley. The lack of water on the northern slope of the *Chinchontepic* volcano was one of the factors that prevented the FMLN from achieving a sustained presence there. Guadalupe's central plaza once consisted of a large catchment basin for gravity fed water captured at higher points on the volcano. When water stopped flowing, the basin was converted to a garden and trees were planted. During 1999, tremors throughout the Jiboa Valley were altering the area water table again and many community wells were going dry. The 2001 earthquake would further damage the region's scarce access to water.

In 1996, GTZ decided to fund a potable water system initiative that had begun with CONARA/SRN funding several years earlier. A well was sunk in San Emigdio near the border with Verapáz and in the first stage of service treated water would be pumped to four communities in Guadalupe and the adjacent community of *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* in Verapáz. A process of local planning between communities in both municipalities that GTZ described as innovative and participatory invited prospective beneficiaries to democratically set the price for water and prepare for the self-administration of the system.⁹⁵⁴

A series of technical errors in the project design and political errors in how the project was promoted eventually inflated the cost of water access, the water service itself, and quickly accumulated a significant debt. The well was located near an active garbage dump requiring greater than anticipated treatment costs. Newly privatized electricity prices increased significantly in 1998, also inducing unanticipated additional costs. One member of the water committee from Aguas Calientes complained that proposed water tariffs for a home connection were as high as \$55 per month – over a third of reported household income.⁹⁵⁵ Rather than aggressively explore avenues for subsidizing energy costs or a sliding scale for water fees to achieve the expected coverage, the Guadalupe municipal government decided to take over the

⁹⁵⁴ GTZ-Promude (1998). The water administration committee was to include three representatives from the municipal government of Guadalupe and six community representatives.

⁹⁵⁵ Water fees for a gravity system in the Bajo Lempa, Tecoluca were between \$3 and \$8 per month, and for a pump system proposed in San Ildefonso, between \$17 and \$20.

project and reversed course by excluding *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* as well as any future expansion to communities in Verapáz.⁹⁵⁶ GTZ was forced to intervene to recover materials for the water system stored in Aguas Calientes that the community was defending to demand the access to water that Guadalupe's mayor had promised. The \$250,000 water project effectively drove a wedge between communities in Guadalupe and Verapáz.

The two ARENA mayors (Guadalupe and San Cayetano Istepeque) frequently ignored the collective agreement to joint micro-region goals when certain decisions did not coincide with the municipalities' immediate interest. Perhaps the most divisive illustration of this dual agenda involved road construction. For several years the micro-region had lobbied the central government strenuously to allocate funding for paving the principal access, extending as well through neighboring communities as an alternative scenic highway linking to San Salvador. Four letters were introduced into the legislative assembly and another to the President between 1996 and 1998 requesting the \$8 million road project, which contemplated improved access, environmental and development investments. These efforts did not succeed. GTZ proposals to publish the most recent letter or a press release in the newspaper and more aggressive lobbying of departmental legislators were rejected due to perceived risk of causing political problems with the ARENA controlled Assembly president.⁹⁵⁷

Having failed to acquire the funding for this collective project, just prior to the 1999 elections, the mayors of Guadalupe and San Cayetano pursued individual road paving projects with local funds. Both paved a short segment of the road that entered each municipality. Guadalupe's mayor held a public meeting to announce his project with local transport business representatives and invite private sector contributions toward the \$20,000 resurfacing project.⁹⁵⁸ Max Menjivar, owner of one local transport company, and UNEX, the coffee processing company owned by Cristiani, each pledged the suggested minimum - \$25.

⁹⁵⁶ Interviews with Alicia Campos, San Pedro Aguas Calientes and Juan Cerritos, Mayor, Guadalupe painted different sides to the story. Campos claims that Cerritos and GTZ mislead their community by offering to include them if the project could access a supply of water pipe stored there from a previous uncompleted water project. She argues that proposed fees were initially much lower and an additional quota of \$2,300 was requested when the project experienced cost overruns. When Aguas Calientes refused the higher fees, water service was suspended. Cerritos denies that promises were made or that the costs were excessive.

⁹⁵⁷ Microregion meeting, June 20, 1998.

⁹⁵⁸ Based on estimates provided at the July 6, 1998 meeting with local transport companies in Guadalupe. Some 50 local businesses were asked to finance the project's fuel costs, which amounted to \$2,260 or 2,201 gallons of diesel.

Perhaps the most pressing and practical need of all four municipalities was dealing with solid waste. Not one of the four mayors had the funds or tax base to finance universal solid waste removal and disposal. A clear advantage offered by microregion coordination was the designation of a single depository shared by all four towns. One modest achievement of the microregion coordination process was the agreement that 5% of FODES transfers would be used for a feasibility study for the solid waste problem. However, the design and implementation of the project has encountered repeated delays.

Land speculation proved to be a veto factor in any real progress on the location of microregion landfill. None of the four municipalities could manage to identify and purchase a property. Whenever a landowner was approached to negotiate the property, the price escalated.⁹⁵⁹ So too with the property on which the infiernillo is located, which is owned by Rosaelia Iglesias – a member of one of the few families that have long dominated coffee production on the volcano. A proposal by GTZ and FMLN deputy, Marta Valladares, advised the Guadalupe municipal government to exercise a constitutional right to issue a local decree declaring the land an ecological reserve eligible for expropriation. San Cayetano mayor Arcenio Hernandez explained why the proposal was effectively rejected, “Unfortunately, although the measure may be applicable, we do not want to meddle in polemics.”⁹⁶⁰ Mayors found themselves unable or unwilling to exercise eminent domain. By 2005, the shared landfill or hot springs tourist center for the microregion Jiboa had yet to be built.

The Microregion meetings were very little about process issues, and almost exclusively about projects. There was no open discussion, much less, critique of the structural obstacles to proposed development visions for the region, be they intransigent local landowners refusing to sell land for public works or the inequality and political influence that restrained strategies that pressured the government. Criticism was offered in private, but public discussion masked the underlying distrust. Guarded distrust of others’ motives was instrumental in preventing more substantive coordinated action

⁹⁵⁹ One prospect in the canton of San Jose Carbonera, Guadalupe asked for \$2,400 for 0.7 hectare of relatively low quality land. MR mtg, June 20, 1998

⁹⁶⁰ Microregion meeting, July 18, 1998, Verapáz.

Despite the leadership of a visionary NGO and stronger ties than Tecoluca to state institutions, effective coordination failed on almost every project that mattered to more than one municipality in the Jiboa Valley. After a frustrating three years of relatively fruitless discussion and evasive political maneuvering, FundaGuadalupe withdrew from the process. Efforts to secure minimal commitments on micro-regional cooperation were undermined by free rider strategies and party loyalties that blocked any visible progress. Few beyond the local elites that were invited to participate in the design of the micro-region knew or had realized any benefit from it. While the concrete benefits were likely to be years off, there was no indication that any were in the pipeline. In the end, the prior consensus of individualism prevailed as action plans were ignored and planning meetings retraced

The CDM process in Tecoluca and Microregion process in the Jiboa Valley each point to the formidable challenges of inter-institutional coordination. However, the differences between these processes could not underscore more clearly the competing empowerment strategies at play.

The range of participants in the Tecoluca's CDM process, both horizontally and vertically, was much more diverse than in the Jiboa Valley microregion. Both processes started with institutional representatives, but after several years, Tecoluca's process opened up to direct community level participation. Jiboa Valley, by contrast, has resisted expanding participation in the central decision making activities and has consequently weakened potential linkages with communities or allied institutions.⁹⁶¹

In Tecoluca, many more NGOs were present and part of the problem of poor coordination. A significant number of NGOs were therefore more responsive to calls for greater local coordination and have participated consistently in the CDM. At the same time, NGO influence has been increasingly balanced by sectoral committees of community representatives. In the Jiboa Valley, few NGOs were available at the outset, and even fewer were invited to engage the process (FUSAI, FundaGuadalupe, SACDEL), eventually pulled back after achieving little.

In Tecoluca, a wider cross-section of INGOs participated actively in the CDM process, often serving as the voice of caution in reaction to aggressive advocacy proposals from local

⁹⁶¹ Jiboa Valley mayors did collect signatures for legislative lobbying in favor the paving of the main access road, although petition signing is considered one of the least empowering political actions.

actors. In contrast, GTZ-Promude was the only INGO in the Jiboa Valley microregion, but served as the catalyst for nearly all of the organizing cues to expand participation and constantly had to push for greater advocacy and leadership by the participant mayors. The only other prominent NGO in the Jiboa Valley (Habitat) did not coordinate its efforts with the microregion. To some extent in both cases, but more so in the Jiboa Valley, the sustainability of the coordination processes was dependent upon INGO support.

Both coordination processes served to place an unprecedented amount of local development information into the public domain. However, the starting points were very different. In Tecoluca, participating institutions came prepared to be held accountable for their work and the process itself was documented with meeting minutes and operational plans that were consulted to varying extents. Among the Jiboa Valley participants, information was shared between mayors but often not transferred to any broader constituency for greater accountability. Thus, options for deepened compromise foundered without any external citizen oversight to validate crucial decisions. The anonymity of coordination failure was ensured by the lack of meeting records.

Both municipal cases faced a similar set of challenges posed by government policies that were generally inhospitable to small producers and rural businesses. Yet, the menu of advocacy strategies that each considered and chose steered in two different directions. In Tecoluca, conflict was understood as a normal characteristic in the web of alliances and adversarial relations that the municipality negotiated to meet defined goals. Confrontational tactics were clearly viewed as legitimate and complementary to the full panoply of conventional advocacy strategies. The menu of advocacy tactics was considerably shorter in the Jiboa Valley. Repeatedly, INGO proposals to push harder for government or private sector compliance with cautiously stated requests were blocked easily by ARENA mayors. Conflict with party elites beholden to local landowners was avoided, and consequently the requests for support were not taken seriously.

These opposing views on the role of conflict in advocacy may simply be artifacts of the current correlation of political force. Would FMLN mayors and NGOs engage an FMLN executive in the same way? To the extent that citizens themselves are in control of the accountability mechanisms, as most indications seem to suggest in Tecoluca, not even an FMLN president would likely enjoy immunity.

D. PARTICIPATION, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

1. Local Resource Mobilization Comparison

There is little reliable and comparable information about local development finance. The relative administrative inexperience of most municipal governments, a culture of non-transparency that still prevails in most rural towns and the budget complications associated with recent reforms to the state transfer law (FODES) are all implicated in this problem. In this section, I offer some comparisons of the resource mobilization strategies and achievements by each municipal case, estimating from the available information.⁹⁶² One of the single most confusing factors during 1998 was the dramatic increase in state transfers and the complicated division of this transfer between FISDL and ISDEM. Many municipal governments experienced significant delays in receiving 1998 allocations, which therefore were reflected in 1999 financial statements.

Table 9.6 compares available data on municipal budgets for the case study municipalities for 1998, with some additional data for 2002 to 2004. The reported municipal budget (investment plan) for 1998 includes only local revenue, transfers and other income, but does not reflect actual expenditures. Thus, municipal income line items (Local tax and fees, FODES transfer) do not add up to the projected budget. In Tecoluca alone was I able to obtain budget information for more than one year, suggesting somewhat greater reliability of the budget figures. Per capita budget estimates suggest that there is little difference between the three cases.

The underestimation of Tecoluca's population (use of 1992 census figure) lowered its proportionate share of FODES transfers by comparison the other cases. Tecoluca received \$18 per capita in 1998, compared \$31.5 per capita in the Jiboa Valley. Tax collection, on the other

⁹⁶² A specific request to COMURES in 2000 for the most recent municipal budget and expenditure data for the 17 participating municipalities produced information for just five. Recent evaluations of decentralization reforms have confirmed that the lack of any single reliable database for municipal finance. Here I rely on partial data provided by mayors in *cabildo abiertos*, municipal publications funded by GTZ-Promude, FISDL, ISDEM, DevTech Systems, Local Development Network database on municipal statistics, and interviews. Problems associated with the uneven reliance on standard budgeting rules reveals many inaccuracies or inconsistencies in the data collected from different sources and best estimates were used when conflicting figures were given.

hand, is four times higher in Tecoluca than the other cases, and FISDL projects approved during 1998 were slightly higher. Non Financial Public Sector investment (health, education, public infrastructure, agriculture, energy, etc.) is estimated by calculating a slightly lower than population share of department level flows (based on the assumption that the city of San Vicente receives the highest share proportionate to its population). Tecoluca received \$52 per capita in public investment compared to \$35 in the Jiboa Valley and \$44 per capita in San Ildefonso.⁹⁶³ If there is no overlap between NFPS funds and municipal budget funds, total public investment of the three case study municipalities totals between \$84 and \$101 per capita – providing some indication of the minimal state commitments to rural development.

INGO cooperation and remittances act as a de facto social safety net where public investment is deficient. Estimates based on FISDL data from 2002 suggest that San Ildefonso is the most dependent on remittance flows, \$68 per capita, over two and half times the per capita amount received by families in Tecoluca. The concentration of INGOs and NGOs in Tecoluca channel an estimated \$1.5 million into the municipality. This amount far exceeds all other municipalities and surpasses the municipal budget. The total budget for CORDES San Vicente alone was \$750,000 in 1998 (not including the spike in assistance in response to Hurricane Mitch). Comparatively, San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley receive much less in INGO funding. The annual budgets for FundaGuadalupe or Habitat for Humanity and the combined annual resources that PCI, ASDI, ITAMA, FUSAI, and CNC invested in San Ildefonso do not exceed \$100,000. If both sources of external non-governmental cooperation are combined, they equal \$85 per capita in Tecoluca, \$77 in San Ildefonso and \$50 in the Jiboa Valley, and represent between 60 and 85% of total public investment.

⁹⁶³ Between NFPS data may include some overlap with FODES & FIS data.

Table 9.6 Comparison of Case Study Municipal Resource Mobilization Achievements

	Tecoluca			San Ildefonso			Jiboa Valley		
Pop. 1998	26,000			11,000			23,000		
Pop. 2002	31,000			12,900			24,700		
1998	Amt US\$	\$Per cap	% Tot	Amt US\$	\$Per cap	% Tot	Amt US\$	\$Per cap	% Tot
Budget	1,278,727	49	26	528,121	48	28	1,132,452	49	36.5
Local tax & fees	223,087	8.6		15,800	1.4		44,973	2.0	
FODES transfer	468,070	18	10	290,232	26.3	15.5	727,607	31.5	23.5
FIS Total	265,410	10		42,263	3.8		148,957	6.5	
FIS Projects	241,475			41,177			141,561		
FIS Loc Ctrpart	23,935			1,087			7,396		
Non. Fin. Pub. Sect. Inv. 1998.	1,350,000	52	28	482,000	44	26	797,000	35	26
Remittances 98	700,000	27	14.5	750,000	68	40	1,000,000	43.5	32.5
INGO Projects	1,500,000	58	31	100,000	9	5.3	150,000	6.5	5
Total 1998⁹⁶⁴		186	100		169	100		134	100
2002-2005	Amt US\$	\$Per cap	% gdp	Amt US\$	\$Per cap	% gdp	Amt US\$	\$Per cap	% gdp
Municipal GDP	\$23,000,000	885		\$10,000,000	775		\$20,00,000	869	
Ave. Budget	1,487,158	48	6.5	n.d.			n.d.		
Local tax & fees	185,809	6.0	0.8	n.d.			n.d.		
FODES	620,066	20	2.7	347,668	27	3.5	983,427	43	4.9
Remittances 2002	1,163,782	37.5	5	1,241,368	96	12.4	1,660,329	72	8.3
NonFinPubSect Inv. 93-01 Ave.	850,000	27	3.7	300,000	27.6	3.0	730,000	32	3.6
Sources: Municipal GDP estimated from UNDP (2003) Departmental GDP estimates; 2002-2005 data from RDL (2005). Tecoluca local tax data is from personal communication with Tecoluca municipal government. 1998 data is from Promude-GTZ and Dev Tech, provided by Gallagher. FISDL provided project data estimates and department level remittance estimates. Remittance amounts are estimated from EHPM household surveys reported by FISDL (2002). Municipal level non-financial public sector investment levels are estimated from San Vicente department averages, given by UNDP (2003). INGO Project flows are estimated from institutional interviews.									

With the 1998 FODES increase, most municipalities are now heavily dependent on transfers. Some have criticized the reform for its lack of incentives to raise local revenue. A

⁹⁶⁴ Total is the sum of budget, public investment, remittances and INGO projects. It is assumed that FISDL, FODES and local taxes are encompassed in the local budget, and that there is no overlap between these local revenue sources and NFPS.

USAID study measured the tax effort or capacity, defined as the expected level of tax collection given a specific municipality's population, poverty level, urbanization.⁹⁶⁵ Using reported municipal taxes and fees data provided by ISDEM for 229 of the country's 262 municipalities, the study tested various models for estimates of the expected tax collection and compares them with actual tax collection.⁹⁶⁶ In general, Gallagher finds that towns that are larger, with higher levels of urbanization, and less poverty tend to collect more taxes.

Table 9.7 Local tax collection improvements

	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Jiboa Valley
1997 Tax per capita \$	1.3	1.6	1.7
1998 Tax per capita \$	7.8	1.7	2.0
Tax effort min estimate	335%	63%	56%
Tax effort max estimate	528%	101%	71%
Tax effort min rank	2	69	133.25
Tax effort max rank	5	122	136.5
2002 Tax per capita \$ mry	6.0	n.d.	n.d.
Source: Gallagher 2001, data are unadjusted for actual population estimates.			

The results summarized in Table 9.7 show that Tecoluca, which according to Gallagher, collected \$223,087 in 1998 taxes and fees, was ranked in the top five performing municipalities in the nation, generating over five times the tax yield expected. This estimate was inflated by 25% due to undercounting Tecoluca's actual population. However, the correction would still place Tecoluca in the top tax performer category. Between 1997 and 1998, reported tax collection increased by almost \$190,000 (over 500%). The ratio of FODES transfers to

⁹⁶⁵ Gallagher (2001) The reader should know that conflicting estimates of municipal revenue (e.g. the ISDEM data used by Gallagher and the GTZ-Promude data for SV municipalities) raise questions about the precision of the claims made by any study.

⁹⁶⁶ The four models explain between 40 and 70% of the variance in per capita municipal tax and fees collection.

municipal revenue in 1998 was 2:1. Data for 2002-2004 suggest that this level of taxation has leveled off, as FODES transfers have increased. The transfer to municipal revenue ratio for this period rose to 3.3:1.

This impressive tax performance dispels claims of predatory interests or inexperience leveled at FMLN mayors during electoral campaigns. What it shows, by contrast, is that in Tecoluca this fiscal aspect of local governance has improved considerably. Combined with three successive re-elections, each by wide margins, the higher tax burden has not translated into lower popularity. In contrast, fiscal responsibility is one of the expectations that most Tecolucans hold for local government

As Gallagher has argued, a fairly simple property tax would double local tax revenue in places like Tecoluca, one municipality considered in the 2000 study. Even after the exemption of most small farms, expected property tax collection would generate at least \$210,500 (based on acreage), slightly below the actual tax collection. The minimum tax on the average 2.5 hectare farm would be \$20. If the property tax was based on value (a more equitable but administratively costly option), revenues in Tecoluca would be considerably higher.⁹⁶⁷ Clearly, the benefits of a property tax to even small and medium municipalities are evident.⁹⁶⁸ Tecoluca is one of a small number of municipalities that has recently achieved an accord with the National Registry (CNR) to acquire an updated property registry for the locality as the basis for a future property tax assessment (*Diario de Hoy* Dec. 2, 2005).

In terms of tax effort, San Ildefonso collected only \$15,800 in taxes in 1998, between 63% and 101% more than expected given the socio-demographic parameters of the municipality.⁹⁶⁹ This tax effort ranked San Ildefonso near the median for the municipalities studied, but no where close to a sustainable revenue source for development. Small increases in tax collection (5%) were noted between 1996-1998, however the ratio of FODES to municipal revenue (17:1) underscores the dependence on transfers.

⁹⁶⁷ DevTech compares land tax collection rates and totals for various Salvadoran municipalities. For a 1% tax on the value of 256,120,000 square meters of land in Tecoluca, the estimated value of tax collection based on value would be \$87 million. For San Salvador, the amount collected was estimated at close \$1 billion.

⁹⁶⁸ Gallagher (2000). Proposed tax rates range from 0.002 colones per square meter (\$0.0002) for rural land to 1.0 colon per square meter in urban San Salvador (\$0.11)

⁹⁶⁹ This ranked San Ildefonso between 69 and 122 out of 200 municipalities in the sample.

For the four municipalities that constitute the Jiboa Valley microregion, the total taxes collected in 1998 were \$45,000, which was between 56% and 71% higher than expected according to the Gallagher study. Of the four municipalities, the coffee producing town of Guadalupe was ranked close to the bottom of all municipalities, collecting less than 25% of expected revenue. By comparison with the other case studies, the slightly wealthier Jiboa Valley collects much less tax revenue than Tecoluca, and slightly less than San Ildefonso. The Jiboa Valley also receives \$727,000 in FODES transfers. The ratio of transfers to municipal taxes is 16:1, similar to San Ildefonso.

Despite the noted data problems, Gallagher concludes that the main cause of the unexplained variance in the tax effort models that were tested can be attributed to differences in fiscal effort.⁹⁷⁰ In other words, state transfers have not only failed to diminish tax collection in but have increased it most in Tecoluca. In short, higher transfers may be associated with lower expected tax efforts, but of the three cases this disincentive appears most true for Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso. When comparing the three fiscal experiences, the likelihood of tax evasion (one aspect of political capture) is highest in the counter-insurgent municipalities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when those asked whether they would be willing to pay more local taxes for services to improve, half of all Tecoluca residents responded affirmatively, compared to 41% in Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso.⁹⁷¹

In addition to the lowest relative dependence on state transfers, the sustained flow of INGO investments in Tecoluca also contributes to greater diversification of local economic development resource base. FODES transfers represented 10% of total local resources, compared to 23.5% in the Jiboa Valley. INGO transfers, by contrast, represent 31% of total resources in Tecoluca, compared to only 5% in the other two cases. Remittances make up the largest single component of local development resources in San Ildefonso (40%) and Jiboa Valley (32.5%). While remittances undoubtedly improve coping strategies for the rural poor, research has shown that low percentages of family to family remittances have been invested in productive investments (World Bank 2005e). A small but increasing number of experiences

⁹⁷⁰ The data problems noted were measurement error, variation in local tax structure, and temporary factors, such as climatic events.

⁹⁷¹ Source is the 1998 paracentral regional survey.

have attracted collective remittance investments in municipal infrastructure projects. However, the atomized nature of remittance networks and the profound needs of recipient families have proven surprisingly durable to concerted efforts to steer this flow of investment toward public goods.

Tecoluca and San Ildefonso municipal delegations have visited with hometown association representatives to explore joint investments, but each faces slightly different obstacles to effective capture and channeling of remittances toward the priorities of their respective municipal investment plan. For Tecoluca, the relatively low percentage of families that receive remittances reflects two factors that lower the probability of establishing strong hometown association (HTA) investment linkages. The first factor is that many if not most families that have settled in Tecoluca were active insurgents, remained in the country to fight, and did not send their children or other family members to the U.S. These families are not as likely to migrate now. The Tecolucans that did migrate tend to be families of former landowners or urban property owners that were hostile to the FMLN and are likely to be indifferent or hostile to public goods investments now.

San Ildefonso counts a much higher percentage of its current labor force in the U.S. (as high as 20%), but faces different problems in converting this resource into local development. The first challenge is a relatively low level of trust in the municipal government and the absence of a coordinated strategic development plan to attract investors. Poor relations between the mayor and large parts of the municipality could make coordination with some hometown associations more difficult.

The second challenge is simply the inherent sensitivity related to government involvement in a highly personal transaction. One a recent effort by FIDA to recruit Salvadoran hometown association leaders to participate as co-financing partners of government local development projects, most were uninterested in any collaboration in which the government would have any control over their money.⁹⁷² To date, the formal government program sponsored by FISDL to capture remittances reports only one such alliance in the three municipal case studies, involving a \$60,000 school in the community of El Socorro, Tecoluca that was co-

⁹⁷² Based on observations as a participant on a 2002 International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) sponsored delegation of twenty Salvadoran HTA leaders to El Salvador to recruit remittance investors as a local counterpart funding for IFAD financed local development projects.

financed by the Hometown Association El Piche, in Los Angeles.⁹⁷³ It is highly likely that there exist other informal projects, but both research and empirical evidence suggests that the vast majority of remittance flows continue to finance consumption. While the effect is clearly a lowering of poverty and the support for local service markets, remittances have also financed imports, driven up the exchange rate (before dollarization) and lowered youth commitments to local development as an alternative to migration. In rural communities where the labor force pyramid has been carved away by the loss of nearly all working age men, the prospects of rural development are diminished. The rather unimpressive track record demonstrated by other programs that have targeted remittances as a potential source for local public investment (IFAD, IDB-MIF) suggests the very real limitations for even weaker municipal governments in managing a more effective use of remittances as a local development tool.⁹⁷⁴

Are INGO investment flows superior to remittances as a local investment resource. INGO investments are likely to be less enduring than remittances for the current beneficiary communities. However, a much higher percentage of INGO funding tends to finance actual public investment than remittances. Moreover, in the case of Tecoluca, as INGO resources migrate to other more demanding destinations, they have leveraged alternative resource flows could ultimately be more sustainable. In Tecoluca, the examples of pre-investment funds, relatively successful production initiatives that are now eligible for credit, and new grant and loan proposals for development – all constitute products of INGO and NGO subsidization of the development process. While both remittances and INGO investments will continue to be significant local development resources, the net development benefits tend to favor INGO cooperation over remittances. Unless improvements are achieved in capturing remittances for public investment and limiting the loss of human and social capital that comes as an expense of replacement migration, the local resource diversification seems most promising in Tecoluca where it is moving beyond transfers and remittances.

⁹⁷³ FISDL *Unidos por la Solidaridad*, report as of Sep. 22, 2004.

⁹⁷⁴ See IDB Multilateral Investment Fund for research on investment and track record of municipal governments in channeling these flows. <http://www.iadb.org/fomin>.

2. The Cabildo Abierto

In this section I compare participation in the *cabildo abierto* - a central municipal budget planning process that is common to local governance and a fundamental mechanism of transparency and accountability in local development finance in El Salvador. Participation in these periodic convocations of the public to discuss, ratify and control municipal income and spending priorities depends to some extent on the active participation of the public. Participation in the cabildo is needed to legitimate local rule.⁹⁷⁵ However, the function of the cabildo varies considerably with respect to historically rooted expectations and performance standards for local governance.

In settings of high inequality, the likelihood of political capture is both a reality and a disincentive for the powerless to participate. Traditionally privileged interests view the cabildo both as a means to steer scarce public development resources in their favor as well as to stave off any redistributive effort that might challenge the actual basis of their power. Elites therefore have an incentive to participate, if only indirectly through surrogate agents. The challenge of collective action in this decentralized decision making process is to promote the optimal level of participation to balance costs with the principal benefit of avoiding political capture by local elites.

Participation in cabildos is similar in each of the three municipal cases – about one in five survey respondents reported participating in a cabildo abierto or municipal session within the past six months. People were then asked the extent to which they perceived these meetings to be representative of all sectors of the community (much, some, little). The results in Figure 9.5 show that just over a third (38%) of the respondents in Tecoluca reported that there was much representation in the cabildos, which while low was considerably higher than San Ildefonso (23%) or Jiboa Valley (19.2%). Finally, people were asked whether the municipal government responds to community needs always, most of the time, some of the time or none of the time. In Tecoluca, 44% responded that the mayor and council respond always or most of the time, compared to 21% in the Jiboa Valley and 11% in San Ildefonso.

⁹⁷⁵ Both because holding cabildos are a requirement to receive state transfers and because local governments believe, albeit to varying degrees, that public input is necessary to improve local governance.

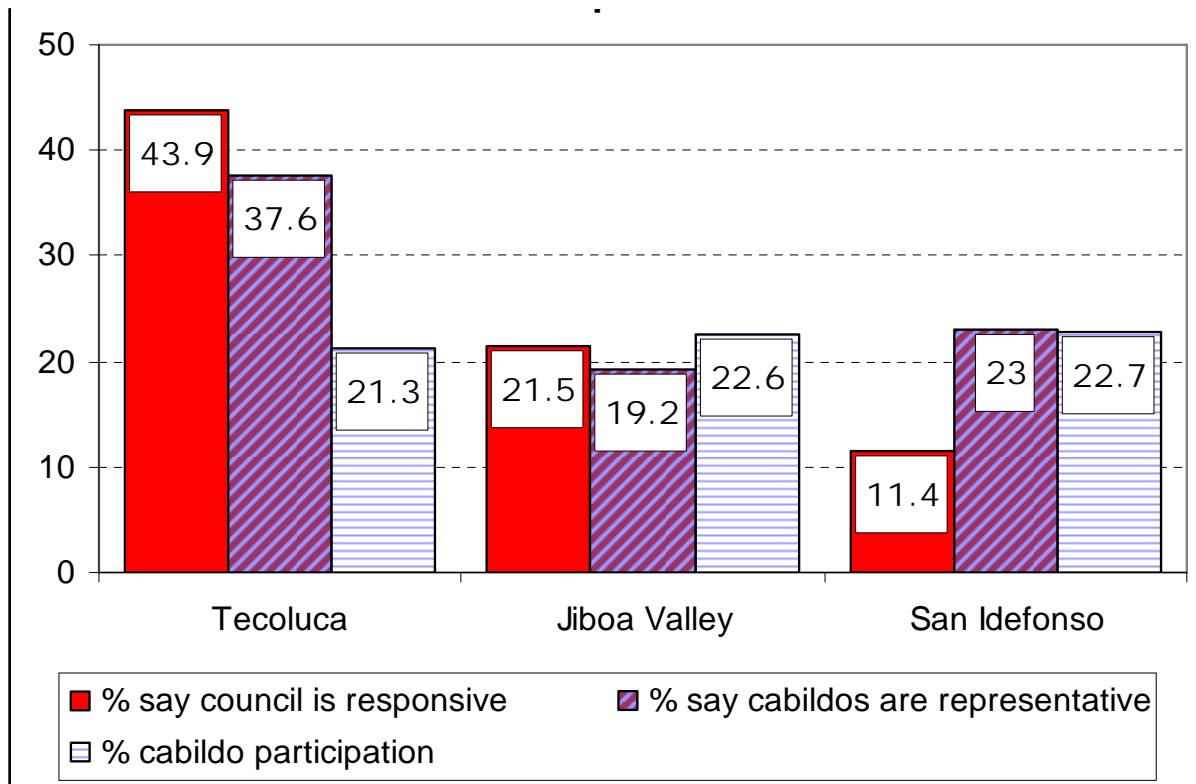


Figure 9.5 Cabildo Participation, Representation, & Council Responsiveness

This survey evidence suggests that participation in town meetings is not necessarily reflective of the representativity of those meetings nor the performance of the town council in responding to local needs. The municipal government in Tecoluca is evaluated more favorably in both indicators.

Participant observation of five cabildo abiertos (all but Nuevo Tepetitán), various council meetings and cabildo pre-meetings, and interviews with all six mayors, various council members and interest group representatives serve as the basis for comparing the quality of cabildo

participation in the three municipal case studies.⁹⁷⁶ The comparison will focus on several factors: scope of participation, transparency, and the range of policy issues considered.

Four of the five observed cabildos were held in June and July of the fiscal year, and Tecoluca held a cabildo abierto one month after Hurricane Mitch had flooded a third of its territory. While municipalities are obligated to hold four cabildos annually, few actually meet this standard. The observed cabildos were most likely one of two cabildos in 1998, due to the FODES reform and Hurricane Mitch. However, the observed meetings were only the second “new” cabildo type town meeting, which experimented with more participatory methods. Most municipal officials view both the old and new cabildo abiertos as an imposed requirement rather than a planning tool that is desired or necessary. Few mayors view them as more than an informational exercise and prefer to limit the scope for citizen participation to the minimum acceptable level.

a. Jiboa Valley

In the Jiboa Valley, four independent cabildos were held in parallel. The three observed cabildo’s in the Jiboa Valley (Verapáz, San Cayetano and Guadalupe) were all convened by multiple term mayors. In the case of Juan Cerritos, the meeting featured the participation of the departmental ARENA governor, Blanca Avalos de Angulo, who in addition to making a heavy handed political pitch for party’s Presidential candidate, recognized Cerritos’ personal achievement as a four term mayor of Guadalupe. As important to the cabildo itself were any preceding meetings to prepare the cabildo. Each of the three municipalities had participated in a local strategic planning process facilitated by the NGO, FUSAI, as part of the CDA capacity building program. However, officials from all three towns complained about FUSAI’s lack of follow through on the Action Plans and acknowledged that the NGO had effectively disappeared. SACDEL, another civic training NGO, had recently begun working in the region, although their

⁹⁷⁶ The respective cabildo abiertos that were observed include Guadalupe (June 26, 1998); Verapáz (June 28, 1998); San Cayetano Istepeque (July 25, 1998); San Ildefonso (July 26, 1998) and Tecoluca (Dec. 26, 1998). The temporal difference between the Tecoluca cabildo with the others may have been a factor in the range of issues discussed, since the investment planning becomes more prominent at the end of a year.

presence was too recent to assess. GTZ-Promude was the principal provider of technical assistance to the councils. Participation in cabildo preparatory meetings were limited to bilateral meetings between GTZ-Promude, the mayor and certain council members. These meetings were viewed as technical and no apparent consultation or participation of NGOs or gremios was invited.

Although agreements noted above obligated the mayors to integrate the microregion planning process and recruit the participation of local leaders, the microregion and cabildo processes were essentially delinked. Juan Cerritos of Guadalupe was the only mayor to present the microregion planning process at all. However, the description of the collective initiative appeared intentionally superficial to embellish the mayor's own achievements. Recognizing that various members of the town had interest in prior microregion efforts to secure the access road paving project, a progress update was pessimistic about chances for approval before 2000. Instead, the funding for paving 2.5 kilometers of road connecting Verapáz to Guadalupe was announced as the crown jewel of the 1999 Investment Plan, and an optimal short-term alternative to the micro-region project. In San Cayetano (and Verapáz), the microregion was not mentioned, but significant attention was devoted to funding allocated to paving 500 meters of main access road.

The Jiboa Valley cabildos closely followed the new cabildo script, with some slight variation. In Verapáz and San Cayetano, but not Guadalupe, a detailed explanation of the FODES transfer increase was provided. In Guadalupe and Verapáz, but not San Cayetano, monthly income and expenses were reported. In every case, a brief description of projects in execution or in the pipeline was provided and space for working groups to prioritize a single project for their cantón or community was facilitated by the mayor or council members. The routine opened only a modicum of additional space for meaningful community participation. Group discussion among community representatives consists of choosing from a pre-determined list of social infrastructure projects.

The community representatives of San Jose la Carbonera in Guadalupe prioritized a walkway crossing a ravine that separated the community from the school. Children and elderly crossing the ravine during the rainy season have drowned and the project had been requested in earlier cabildos. Without doubting the need for this project, one is surprised by the suggestion that a walkway is only expectation from the municipal government for a community of

extremely poor subsistence farmers that also lacks clean drinking water and electricity. Similarly, in the community of La Entrevista of San Cayetano, which had been battling with the mayor and Cristiani's beneficio Acahuapa over environmental concerns, the community representative prioritized a \$2,000 Community center. Low expectations or self-censorship underscore how unchanged agrarian relations have shaped the local institutions.

No concerns were voiced regarding any of the financial information provided or the information omitted. Guadalupe reported one project in execution and an investment plan that featured ten projects for a total of \$350,000. While ambitious, the investment plan exceeded the 1998 budget by 55%, of which 70% was state transfers. Where monthly income and expenses figures were provided, the cumulative deficit over four months in Verap  z was \$5,000 and in Guadalupe, \$9,000. Yet, no explanation or clarification was requested nor given. There was no discussion of agricultural production issues, long-term development strategies, public policy, or the cabildo rules themselves.

Municipal officials in all three cabildos expressed some level of frustration with low turnout. Some attributed it to communications difficulties or misunderstandings, but the overarching reaction was a paternalist condescension that the poor are unable to seize the few opportunities provided to them. In turn, the councils saw little rationale for offering greater incentives. The mayors' view of participation ranged from indifference to resentment. Orlando Paredes of Verap  z reflected,

Now people don't want to participate. Most of the birth certificates were lost when the municipal offices were burned in 1980. Under a Presidential decree (205) people could recover their birth certificate if they presented a baptismal document. Although two ISDEM representatives were here for two years, people did not take the opportunity. People don't approach the mayor until they need something desperately, not before. Here, things don't work.⁹⁷⁷

b. San Ildefonso

Past cabildo and participatory municipal planning history in San Ildefonso was limited to a single notebook summarizing the results of a December 1997 cabildo (the most recent one) and a 1996

⁹⁷⁷ Interview with Orlando Paredes, Verap  z, July 8, 1998

Action Plan, which was a result of participatory planning exercise conducted by FUSAI under the previous mayor. Both indicated a prioritization of road repairs, health care, water, delinquency, organizational deficiencies and lack of credit or technical assistance. The 1996 Action Plan consulted widely in the municipality for the first time in the post-war period and deposited the responsibility for follow through in the prioritized areas to a Community Support Committee.⁹⁷⁸ Representation on this committee was to include representative of communities, NGOs, the municipal government, DIDECO and FUSAI.

As promising as this nascent coordination structure seemed in 1996, there remained no evidence of its existence by 1998. The minutes of a December 1997 cabildo constituted a summary of projects recently finished, in execution, prioritized and proposed by twelve of the 57 communities represented. This list of projects focused entirely on social infrastructure and six proposals were for town center improvements.

In March, 1998 two council representatives and the sindaco resigned to protest the alleged misuse of municipal funds by the mayor. The situation was aggravated by the fact that no one had been paid for months. Costanza's first year as mayor of San Ildefonso was plagued with personal and public scandals. In one instance, the mayor attempted to build a private house on property belonging to the local clinic, beginning only several months after her term began. When confronted by critics, the construction was halted.⁹⁷⁹

As with most municipal events organized in San Ildefonso, the ceremonial drama of the cabildo abierto rivaled meaningful dialogue as the principal goal. The July meeting in San Ildefonso began three hours late with the national anthem as the mayor, ARENA Congressman Amado Aguilúz, stood before 40 participants at the table of honor.⁹⁸⁰ Costanza saluted rigidly in

⁹⁷⁸ FUSAI (July 24, 1996) San Ildefonso Municipal Action Plan. The report indicates the participation of 76 people, including representatives from all six cantons, the town center, the Catholic church, four state agencies and two NGOs. The follow-up committee had nine members, including the mayor, two NGOs, the church, two community organizations, and three community representatives.

⁹⁷⁹ Other instances included a bitter public dispute with an ex-husband who was also local justice of the peace and local ARENA official, the impoundment of the town's single solid water collection vehicle for improper registration, and charges of armed assault. The municipal finances were subject to almost a constant audit by the Court of Accounts since 1998, motivated both by poor bookkeeping and political attacks from COENA. In January 2001, the municipal offices of San Ildefonso were visited by a delegation of three lawyers and 18 police to conduct a surprise inspection of municipal finances and "falsedad ideológica" or illegal party identification. *Vertice, Diario de Hoy*, March 17, 2002.

⁹⁸⁰ While most meetings begin late in El Salvador, the three hour delay exceeded all other cabildos.

the trademark gesticulation of patriotism. There seemed to be no fixed agenda. A sorghum for beans seed exchange program administered by CENTA was the first order of business and instantly fixed the attention of the mostly male farmer audience to the program registration official.⁹⁸¹ The municipal secretary then exhorted the participants to renew their identification documents, which would be subject to fines otherwise.

The mayor then took stock of the community representatives in attendance and scolded several communities for not sending representatives. One councilperson openly referred to the FMLN community, Los Almendros, as “cowards” for not attending. The mayor then appealed for urban residents to pay their taxes, citing the soaring municipal electricity costs. She announced the recent legislative approval of the 6% increase in transfers without mentioning the municipal allocations or conditions, and suggested that the paving of the main municipal access road would soon follow. The recent *Plan de Nación* consultation by the National Development Commission was ridiculed as a plot to disenfranchise small municipalities (CND 1998). A list of projects recently executed was then read aloud, with notable overlap with projects associated with from earlier cabildos. It was announced that FISDL project funding was delayed without explanation and that no plans had been established yet for FISDL funds allocated for 1998. This jumbled and incomplete presentation of the town’s fiscal affairs undoubtedly left participants more confused than informed.

Each community representative was then invited to share their project proposal. The council members exercised no facilitation as a list of social infrastructure projects were read aloud without elaboration or group discussion, except to note prior requests of the same project. The list clearly exceeded the municipal budget, but there was no indication of how the stated needs would be prioritized. Twenty communities were represented in the written requests, both highland and lowland villages.

The discussion then returned to the seed exchange. Lolo Melendez, councilman and CNC representative announced that he would be representing the agricultural needs of the municipality in a future meeting to discuss the inauguration of a commodities market. When suggestions were elicited, the reaction from several producers was to criticize the government

⁹⁸¹ The 1997 drought caused steep losses to the sorghum harvest in San Ildefonso despite access to hybrid improved seeds. The exchange was intended to bolster local bean supply and lower imports. San Ildefonso produces very little beans.

seeds as defective and to express the need for greater technical assistance for area producers. The response by the councilmen was to encourage producers to visit the Lempa Acahuapa Ministry of Agriculture office themselves to solicit technical assistance.

The cabildo ended without summary or closure, simply dissolving into friendly personal conversations. No information in writing was presented nor distributed to the participants. The financial report was clearly incomplete and unorganized, a somewhat daring display of incompetence given the alleged corruption swirling around the current mayor. However, the low turnout and absence of most opposition leaders ensured the any criticism would be limited to those few in attendance. The agenda was controlled by the mayor, who spoke for most of the time offering almost no space for participation. Moreover, the vertical distance between the honorary participants and the audience was reinforced by every aspect of the event's design.

Despite the spectacle of local governance in San Ildefonso that has done very little to diminish the levels of extreme poverty in the town, the mayor has been re-elected three times after switching parties to the PCN.

c. Tecoluca

In Tecoluca, planning meetings prior to the cabildo were more systematic and substantive. The municipal council and allied NGOs held CDM sectoral assemblies in each of the six subsectors. The goal of these assemblies was to prepare elected sectoral representatives to facilitate the formulation, proposal and negotiation of prioritized projects to be funded by the 1999 budget. Collective decisions would be made by participants at the cabildo.

In meetings in the months leading up to the December cabildo abierto, community and NGO leaders were convened in CDM sectoral assemblies and directly by the municipal council to discuss how to guide the prioritization of scarce local funds. Community and organizational leaders struggled to transparently weigh their own sector's needs with their neighbors. Should projects be prioritized to help consolidate the more advanced processes expand and potentially employ more people, or provide initial support to the weakest sectors get started? Should the coastal communities recently battered by Hurricane Mitch be privileged even though they have historically attracted the lion's share of local investment? In one of the pre-meetings, the mayor recognized that Santa Cruz Porillo – a town that has historically opposed the FMLN, was the

sector least supported in the preceding year and that geographic prioritization should balance this deficit. These and various other questions of equity emerged as community leaders debated the appropriate criteria for project prioritization.

The disagreement over CDM orientation between GTZ-Promude, the municipal council and other NGOs also influenced discussion about the extent of citizen participation that was necessary to prepare for the cabildo. GTZ-Promude advised in favor of setting pragmatic limits on the scope of citizen involvement that would narrow the focus of the resource targets to the 6% FODES transfers. The priority for GTZ-Promude was to avoid missing the deadline for submitting the 1999 budget, a goal that would be at risk if citizens were given too much participatory space to change the rules.

In opposition to the advice of the GTZ, it was decided that the discussion would not be confined to only carving up the 6% FODES transfer. The cabildo would also include the council's plans to seek additional funding from the central government and international donors. The risky decision to include external fundraising goals was intended to both encourage responsible choices in the allocation of guaranteed resources (perhaps to lengthen time horizons), but also to encourage participants to think at a larger scale and to motivate participation in future advocacy actions to meet these targets.

At the Tecoluca cabildo, among the materials that were printed by the council and distributed to the 150 participants, was a small list of project prioritization criteria that had been formulated over the past month in discussions among institutional and community representatives.⁹⁸² The unranked project selection criteria were:

1. Sectors and communities that have least benefited to date.
2. Projects that benefit more than one community (or largest percentage of the municipal population)
3. Projects in communities that are disposed to offer their support and that want to be involved in the entire process and execution of the project.
4. Projects that facilitate the generation of employment and production
5. Projects in communities that are organized.

⁹⁸² The single page pamphlet that summarized the participatory budgeting rules was titled, *Participatory and Public Prioritization and Planning of Project Funds* (Dec.12, 1998). Other relevant public documents were made available by the municipal government, including recent census data, GTZ-Promude promotional material, project registries, and various diagnostic materials.

6. Special consideration should be made for coastal communities recently harmed by flooding.

The handout opened with the following Council Message, “The members of the municipal council of Tecoluca represented by Nicolás Antonio García Alfaro, in this way want to state to all of the communities of our municipality our gratitude for the confidence that has been generated between us and for the immense support that you have offered during the current administration.” In contrast to the public scolding that cabildo participants received in San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley, Tecoluca’s municipal government sought to establish a context in which citizen participation was fully invited and thus respected. However, this empowerment strategy left considerable bargaining power in the hands of those invited to participate.

The Tecoluca cabildo involved a description of projects recently completed, in execution, and approved in the pipeline (totaling \$1.3 million). The 1998 FODES quota for Tecoluca was explained, including the fact that it was allocated on the basis of a population underestimate of almost 50%. The mayor then emphasized to the participants that the administrative capacity of the municipal government exceeds the FODES amount and listed other proposed projects that were being pursued in addition to small scale infrastructure. These included feasibility studies for an Ecological Park, a composting project, a gender training workshop for public employees, a central restaurant, a microenterprise study to accompany a planned regional judicial center, daycare centers in three rural villages, a new cattle auction yard, road construction equipment, a new central market, and an urban sanitation program. The final external project was a master proposal for an irrigation and flood protection infrastructure in the Lempa valley that would be directed to the IDB, JBIC and the World Bank.

Not only did the focus of these additional projects address non-traditional demands to local government, such as employment, environment, gender and organizational issues, but they also targeted an unusually diverse field of donors (INGOs, Bilateral and Multilateral cooperation).

After a reprise of the methodology that resulted in the selection criteria, most of the time was devoted to prioritizing five projects in each of the seven geographic sectors – all of which were represented. The proposed list was then presented to the plenary. García exhorted the participants to reflect on these inputs, “if we want to work for democracy and participation, we

have to take it all the way. In the working groups, it's fine to analyze your situation independently, but take into account the given criteria.”

A brief period for questions and answers focused on details of the larger projects being pursued, followed by an hour of group discussion by sector facilitated in each group by the council representative. Each sectoral representative then presented a list of priority projects, all of which varied between three and six projects that largely consisted of social infrastructure. If the FODES allocation of \$435,000 was divided evenly between the seven geographic sectors, each would receive about \$50,000. The average project list totaled \$82,000. Sectors Santa Cruz Porillo topped the seven sectors with a list of six priority projects for over \$120,000, including one environmental project. The Lower Lempa sector proposed the second highest level of funding. The urban sector of San Nicolás, by contrast, requested three projects for \$26,000. The ranking of Santa Cruz and the Lower Lempa geographic sectors as the top two favored sectors suggests that the prioritization criteria had some influence on the group discussions. At least two of the 24 proposed projects identified non-traditional funding sources.

The process was far from perfect. Inadequate information about the state of municipal finances was presented. No clear instructions were given about how to apply the budgeting criteria nor how the proposals would ultimately be prioritized by the council. Although non-traditional funding sources were announced, participants were not clear about the scope of available funding for their needs assessment. Nevertheless, all but one sectoral proposal exceeded their respective FODES quota.

Still, by most accounts, the Tecoluca cabildo surpassed the other cases by introducing structural development issues, attempting participatory budgeting practices and expanding the scope of possible development resources for the consideration of citizen oversight.

Table 9.8 summarizes the key similarities and distinctions between the cabildo abiertos held in the three municipal cases.

The scope of participation varied considerably. In Tecoluca alone, considerable attention was devoted to mechanisms for participatory budgeting methods prior to the cabildo, which produced the highest and most representative turnout. The representation and turnout was lowest in the Jiboa Valley. San Ildefonso used the enticement of the government seed exchange to invite participation and there was moderate representation of the six cantónes and interest groups, although nothing remotely approaching the 1996 strategic planning session.

Tecoluca followed a combined Community-Contract collective action strategy of sectoral assemblies and collective discussions of equity to appeal to local solidarity traditions and ensure the level and quality of participation that is expected of local institutions. Jiboa Valley mayors followed a low level Market collective action strategy providing few incentives to participate but resigned to low expectations and uninterested in negotiating to improve representation. San Ildefonso exhibited many features of the Hierarchy collective action strategy that structured the event to reinforce the flagging credibility of the mayor and the vertical distance between citizen and official.

The comparison suggests that despite the new rules, cabildos still tend to be more informative and than consultative. However, even in the area of transparent information provision, none of the cabildos performed exceptionally well, with inconsistent methods and content in the presentation of administrative and financial information. None provided printed financial material. Explanations of the FODES reform and its implications for development resources were not explained in San Ildefonso and Guadalupe. Little feedback was elicited to validate or question any of the financial summaries. Of the three cases, the integration of the CDM mechanism, despite its deficiencies, was the only instance of concerted effort to strengthen the accountability of municipal finances to community representatives. Although the mayor's complained about their respective administrative non-viability, Jiboa Valley micro-region coordination commitments were delinked as solution in the cabildo discussions. The microregion or any other coordination space was generally absent from the cabildo process in the other cases. By 2000, Tecoluca was one of only a handful of municipalities in El Salvador that had formed a Comptrollers Committee that prepared and presented an accounting for that year's municipal administration (RDL 2003: 177).

Table 9.8 Summary of Cabildo Abierto Collective Action Strategies

	Jiboa Valley	San Ildefonso	Tecoluca
1. Scope of participation (in setting priorities)	MARKET CA STRATEGY	HIERARCHY CA STRATEGY	COMMUNITY CA STRATEGY
	- Low turnout - Low Representation - No participatory budget rules	- Low turnout + Medium Representation - No participatory budget rules	+ High turnout + High representation + Participatory budget rules
2. Transparency & Accountability	LOW-MODERATE	LOW	MODERATE-HIGH
	+ Project pipeline presented + Quarterly finances (2/3) + FODES partially explained - No prior documentation - Microregion delinked from cabildo participation	- No budget or project information presented in writing - FODES not explained - Minimal prior documentation - No link to prior Local Development Committee or municipal coordination mechanism	+ Projects pipeline presented - No Quarterly finance information provided + FODES explained + Prior documentation available + CDM process integrated
3. Range of policy issues and investment options	LOCAL	LOCAL	LOCAL & NATIONAL-STRUCTURAL
	+ Social Infrastructure	+ Social Infrastructure + Agricultural production	+ Social Infrastructure + Agricultural production + Employment + Environment + Gender + Flood reconstruction plans + Long term development plans

INGO and NGO funding exists in parallel to the municipal budget in all three municipal cases, yet Tecoluca was the only cabildo that attempted to integrate these “off-budget” resources into the discussion about the municipal investment plan. While only a nascent step in a process of mutual accountability and coordination that has continued to mature, this decision to expand the scope of available development resources is another distinguishing aspect of early participatory budgeting. A far wider range of policy issues was also present in the Tecoluca cabildo than in the other cases, applying the development principle that the parochial mold of

limiting decisions to pre-determined projects and funding limits can be broken. San Ildefonso devoted some time in the cabildo to production issues. However, when the discussion agenda shifted to the participant's exploration of solutions to the profound challenges facing local farmers, the discussion was ended. In the Jiboa Valley, the mayors hewed close to the script that fulfilled the minimal obligations under a top-down conception of decentralization.

The most promising instances of NGO-municipal coordination within increasingly accountable participatory budgeting processes have emerged in Tecoluca. The participatory budgeting process revealed the character of local governance in Tecoluca. The process for setting spending prioritization criteria was relatively transparent and balanced. This effort to integrate local economic development processes was one reason why NGOs staff participated in Tecoluca cabildos. However, eloquent and often more easily heard demands of NGOs were held in check by principles of equity. Project selection criteria were agreed upon, but the council also made certain that the discussion only reinforced the perception that municipal resources were insufficient to meet local demands. Thus, the parochial and disempowering exercise of a more perfect division of an inadequate budget has been transcended. Consequently, Tecolucans have evaluated the performance of their local government more positively than the two counter-insurgent cases.

E. AGENCY AND POLITICAL CAPTURE

There are differing views about the optimal level of participation in local economic development and governance processes, which I have argued is contingent on accumulated political experiences and expectations in respective insurgent and counter-insurgent towns. The noted differences in FMLN and ARENA cabildo abiertos are not unlike those described in the inter-institutional coordination spaces and the experience of municipal coordination in the San Vicente CDA. Insurgent and counter-insurgent experiences have shaped the emergence of local development institutions by holding them to different performance standards.

Hierarchical, paternalist organizational structures in ARENA and PCN communities have effectively restored or preserved the pre-war civic association model where elites ply the fearful

poor with patronage and charity but set clear limits against politicized between-group ties or vertical negotiations with the state. Bottom-up, principled organizing by insurgent FMLN communities is dismantling the pre-war edifice of social and economic inequality through thoughtful and determined creation of participatory mechanisms. The comparative evidence of competing empowerment strategies provides some clues as to how the collective action problems are resolved.

A Market collective action strategy targets the costs and benefits (perceived and real) of individual participation. A Contract strategy focuses on negotiations designed to alter the constraint or benefit structure for participation. Both the Market and Contract collective action strategies emphasize influence over the rationality of spontaneous individual participation. A Hierarchy strategy depends on selective benefits and sanctions as incentives for participation of a targeted population. A Community strategy might draw from and strengthen existing norms of reciprocity and past experiences of collective action that encourage participation to ensure representation. Both the Hierarchy and Community strategies for collective action are contingent on highly planned coercion or the prompt of endogenous norms that requires less planning.

The variation in success in promoting participation, accountability and transparency through *cabildo abiertos* is but one of many instances of how the challenge of collective action impinges on the effectiveness of decentralized development in settings of high inequality. On one hand, the advent of democracy has forced many patrons that were previously shielded by military force to compete for votes and investment. Dominant elites have had to diversify their collective action strategies to ensure the type of participation that does not threaten their authority. Political capture involves stacking the deck in these participatory spaces to steer them into safe harbors. On the other hand, local decision making that requires some level of institutional coordination is prone to political capture through the reverse threat of exit by vested local elites to avoid accountability. The effective management of scarce joint resources such as municipal budgets, a water supply, forests, or an irrigation district is dependent upon the compliance with a mutually agreed set of rules for sustainable and/or equitable resource use. While powerful elites have often absorbed the costs of coordination to prevent free riding by the poor, they also just as frequently enjoy exit options that make these rules non-binding in the absence of effective monitoring and enforcement capacity by non-elites. As such, the challenge

of collective action to ensure the sustainable and fair use of common pool resources may involve the restriction of elite exit options. How the respective actors choose to act to resolve these collective action problems can also be understood within the proposed agency framework.

Figure 9.6 illustrates the multiple collective action strategies that have been employed simultaneously by both insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks, but highlights that there were discernibly differing starting points and trajectories. For example, both insurgent and counter-insurgent movements in El Salvador relied to differing degrees on a Hierarchy CA strategy to mobilize support and reduce resistance during the civil war. However, the starting point for hard-line counter-insurgents was a very similar repertoire of Hierarchy CA strategies. For insurgents, their starting point before the war came from a Community strategy preference that then gravitated to a balance between Contract and Hierarchy strategies during the war (culminating in the agreement between the five rebel factions to create the FMLN). However, reliance on sustained Hierarchy strategies by the FMLN during the war was neither as exclusive nor as intense as the government and military.

In the post-war period, hard-line counter-insurgents were forced to diversify their collective action strategies as a consequence of the dismantling of much of the repressive state apparatus and an increase in political competition. The FMLN has also employed a shifting balance between all four collective action strategies, contrary to the more dire predictions about the insurgent pathological tendencies toward greed, opportunism, corruption and coercion. If we were to believe the arguments of Salvadoran elite and its U.S. benefactors, before, during and after the civil war, FMLN rule would be intolerant, authoritarian, secretive, unrestrained in the violation of property rights and human rights – almost the polar opposite view than what has occurred in Tecoluca. The predominant strategies of FMLN governance at the local level have been, in fact, more pragmatic – striving to perfect local governance through Contract and Community CA strategies, despite the noted tension and interconnectedness between them.

Comparing empowerment strategies for cabildo participation underscores the different preferences and capacities for collective action. A Market strategy for cabildo participation used most frequently was the promotion of increased state transfers or special projects to raise the perceived probability of benefiting. San Ildefonso also included a government seed exchange as part of the cabildo agenda as an incentive for farmer participation. A second Market strategy used with varying effectiveness involved efforts to foster perceptions of efficient administration

to increase the perception that participation will translate into expected outcomes. Tecoluca extended this into a risk taking transparency strategy, or taking unprecedented steps to signal greater budget transparency through pre-meeting information dissemination. In the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso, mayors engaged in agenda setting to restrict entry by unilaterally delinking potentially more effective development mechanisms (the Jiboa micro-region and several proposed coordination mechanisms in San Ildefonso) from the cabildo process.

Coercion as the principal Hierarchy collective action strategy was most evident in San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley. Mayors and council members publicly reprimanded and demeaned absent community leaders and scolded those present for not fulfilling their duties. In both cases, COENA intervened in local affairs by picking and sanctioning local candidates, blocking coordination with FMLN within CDA and the Jiboa Microregion, as well as providing selective incentives to undermine coordinated local projects.

In Tecoluca, Hierarchy strategies are reflected by the fact that INGO and NGO budgets remain largely delinked from the cabildo discussion of municipal finance despite the tremendous influence of this source of local investment. The perceived lack of NGO accountability in Tecoluca may partly explain the lower performance evaluations. INGOs may also be exercising Hierarchy collective action strategies when they intervene directly in discussions about local advocacy. INGOs in Tecoluca have cautioned against more radical options for collective advocacy, while GTZ-Promude and FundaGuadalupe in the Jiboa Valley have had to push Microregion Jiboa mayors to explore participation, advocacy and coordination options that they would not likely have chosen voluntarily

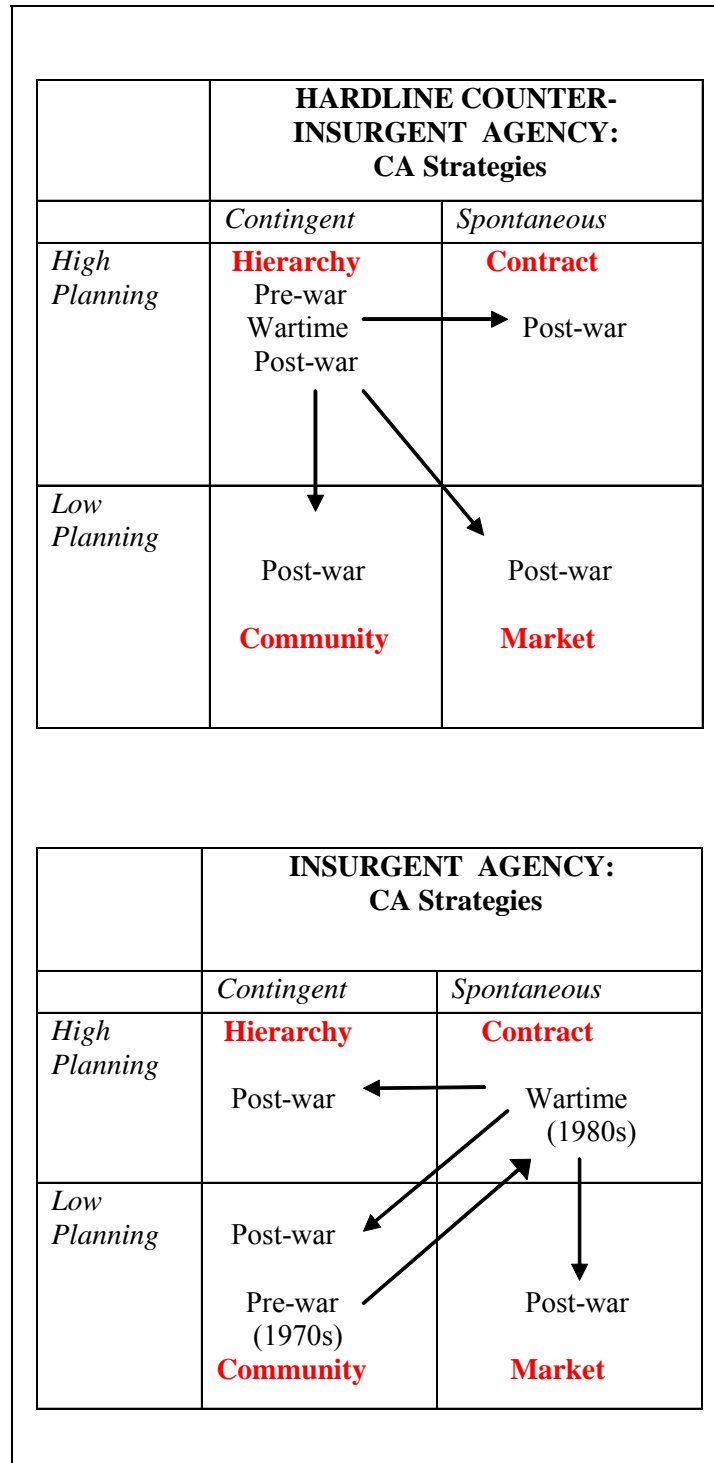


Figure 9.6 Counter-Insurgent & Insurgent Collective Action Strategies

Contract strategies include the prior negotiation of development priorities in Tecoluca through sectoral assemblies to improve information access and clarify priorities before the cabildo. CDM meetings also involved negotiations over representation in the rule making process, particularly among historically excluded sectors. The pre-cabildo representation processes were generally absent in the two other case studies. Steps toward reducing the off-budget status of NGO finance in the Tecoluca cabildo and the inclusion of non-FODES funding sources and projects into the field of consideration for participants also constitute two significant Contract strategies with other institutions toward greater integration of all local investments into a single accountability mechanism.

Debates over participatory budgeting criteria in Tecoluca suggest a Community collective action strategy of appealing to local norms of equity and fairness that was exclusive to the insurgent case. The fear of organizing in the Jiboa Valley results in selective invitation of participants and agenda setting. This empowerment by invitation process parallels the promotion of informal, bottom-up independent local organizing to better defend the competing conceptions of a local mandate in Tecoluca (particularly illustrated by protests against local polluters and the lobbying between orthodox and revisionist factions within the FMLN). The same tensions that ultimately led to significant post-war rights based struggles and were crucial in generating municipal primaries in Tecoluca resulted in quashed protest activity and the defection of local elites from ARENA to the PCN with few implications in local support.

As suggested at the outset, when Market strategies were the principal approach to cabildo participation, the results were disappointing. Tecoluca's performance in empowerment achievement at the institutional level has relied more than San Ildefonso or the Jiboa Valley on Contract and Community strategies. Formal organization is a Contract collective action strategy explicitly designed to improve resource mobilization and distribution. In Tecoluca more than any other case, the rise of Salvadoran NGOs and the consequent decline of gremios illustrates the Contract strategy at work. However, by itself this Contract strategy of NGO formation is not panacea. Planning and organization in the rise of increasingly bureaucratic NGOs tends to come at the expense of ideology or radical norms of more informal gremios and grassroots CA strategies. This noted tension exists between Contract strategies and Community strategies within insurgent municipalities.

Similarly, Hierarchy strategies that rely on coercion or selective benefits/sanctions can only temporarily solve collective action problems, before voluntarism is overwhelmed by opportunism. Hierarchy can also destroy Community strategies. Taylor (1982) has argued that selective incentives foreclose Community strategies by undermining altruism, reciprocity and voluntarism. Exclusive reliance on selective incentives or disincentives can have a similarly corrosive effect on the ability to legitimate bargaining positions contemplated in a Contract strategy. We see these effects in the ARENA Hierarchy collective action strategy in tax policy. ARENA and PCN legislators have blocked the most progressive tax reforms and have been silent on enforcing compliance with existing tax laws. ARENA and PCN mayors have for the most part acquiesced to this policy imposition by blocking an endorsement for property tax reform by COMURES and essentially refusing to exercise eminent domain to advance strategic public development initiatives. Particularly for those mayors, such as Juan Cerritos and now Julia Costanza that lost party backing, these choices may in hindsight seem less aligned with their interests.

Along these same lines, COENA's sabotage of bipartisan *Iniciativa Vicentina*, non-partisan endorsement of the CDA political agenda and any locally coordinated initiatives that would provide dividends to the FMLN, have come at a significant cost to local economic development in counter-insurgent communities. The negative impact of Hierarchy collective action strategies on local resource mobilization has forced the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso to fall back on Market strategies that largely revolve around remittances. Remittance transfers are inherently an individual exit option strategy with ambiguous social net effects in terms of capital acquisition and reproduction. This remittance effect is most prevalent in San Ildefonso. In the Jiboa Valley Microregion, the limitations set by COENA interventions on the optimal economic option of a coordinated campaign to win a paved access road have disintegrated into the pursuit of individual road projects.

Tecoluca's superior tax collection performance suggests that the local government has negotiated either a negative tit-for-tat agreement to sanction and reward tax compliance or has improved commitments to self-government to broker a tradeoff between compliance and effective service delivery. At the same time, Tecoluca is one of the few municipalities aggressively coordinating with other municipalities to pursue a property tax. Finally, the variation in how local coordinating mechanisms were achieved and have contributed to the

respective volume and productivity of INGO investment differentiates the dependence on Contract collective action strategies in Tecoluca.

By contrast, the incapacity to negotiate a more diversified funding base without compromising local autonomy characterizes a lower reliance on contract strategies in the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso. Ineffective capacity to negotiate public goods investments with remittances and failed negotiation between cooperative members with ISTA over land security are additional examples of the roadblocks to contract strategies that are more prevalent in the counter-insurgent cases.

This does not mean the Tecoluca has eschewed Market resource mobilization strategies of increasing and improving local services. Tecoluca's achievement of the highest level of public support for tax increases is indicative of this strategy. It merely suggests rather that Market strategies are balanced by Community strategies socializing the equity benefits of tax reform and compliance. The credibility of the local government to do so is strengthened by strong public signals of commitment to these principles. Three examples in Tecoluca include the mayor's decision to voluntarily exercise term limits, the higher relative participation of women in the municipal council and the CDM, and significant investments in advocacy capacity building to enhance citizen's collective pursuit of common objectives regardless of the institutional target. In contrast, perceptions associated with the Nonualco Coffee Cooperative in the Jiboa Valley and the Lempa Acahuapa Irrigation district bordering San Ildefonso reflect a much higher tolerance for unaccountability and clientelism as the cost of doing business in areas of higher inequality. The failure of PRODAP to enable subsistence producers to escape rigged regional commodity markets and the capacity of ARENA to block an IDB loan for sustainable development in the Bajo Lempa of Tecoluca demonstrate the susceptibility to even the best designed development initiatives to political capture. The fact that local institutional elites in Tecoluca have not been able to capture local decision making processes is a validation of the checks and balances that result from lower inequality.

Lichbach (1998: 271) argues that Market and Hierarchy strategies are mostly likely to generate or perpetuate inequality. The lower FMLN reliance on these strategies is associated with diminished inequality in zones of insurgent influence. Conversely, inequality has persisted in areas of counter-insurgent influence, as in the Jiboa Valley, a zone of military or government influence during the war. Here the preferred war mobilization collective action strategies that

vary between Hierarchy and Market have been adapted again to reinforce post-war inequality. Demonstrated by the quantitative and qualitative evidence in this chapter, both tendencies have left their mark on post-war development processes.

Finally, the competing empowerment strategies may be distinguished by the range of advocacy options available to insurgent and counter-insurgent communities. Insurgents from Tecoluca have engaged in collective and at times contentious actions to fend off political capture in the post-war period. Examples include participation in conflictive and at times, violent protests to reduce the agrarian debt, to fight contamination by a local sugar mill, to have the government fulfill the Peace Accords, and to find permanent solutions to the vulnerability of the lower Lempa valley, among others.

War-wounded ex-combatants of the Salvadoran armed forces and ex-civil patrollers have also engaged in important and contentious protests in the post-war period demanding indemnification promised them in the Peace Accords. These protest actions by communities aligned with the right suggest three possible explanations regarding the linkage between political experiences and empowerment strategies. 1) Counter-insurgent political experiences have also contributed to the capacity for contentious collective action. Perhaps the experience as an ex-combatant per se is a distinguishing resource for effective, collective action. 2) GOES communities have learned protest methods from the FMLN and appropriated into their tactical repertoire. 3) Such political experiences are irrelevant to post-war local politics.

The key distinction between the insurgent and counter-insurgent contentious advocacy illustrations is the duration of the former. The civil patrollers or armed forces never congealed as an independent political movement, but have been subject to the arbitrary representation of elite policymakers. Insurgent advocacy strategies have continued to accumulate and reproduce political capital as well as modulate effectively between conventional and contentious modes.

What Tecoluca has learned about advocacy is summarized in the views of Emilio Espín, the regional director of CORDES:

Single actors cannot do it alone, but need to persuade larger allies (INGOS, bilateral and multilateral donors) to back their position. These organizations are not monolithic, creativity is required to find allies within them. Pragmatic relationship building and leverage are essential and the conventional bureaucratic options must be exhausted before politically divisive tactics become viewed as legitimate. Unnecessary provocation of the reactionary right is a frequent flaw in the strategic defeats experienced by leftist organizations. The most that a new revolutionary government can do is deepen credibility, make

marginal gains, but not structural ones. There are no development models and many have suffered from the rigidities that past leftists have tried to impose.

Achieving USAID's commitment to fund the road to La Pita illustrates this strategy. International allies were mobilized (SHARE, CISPES, Sister City organizations) and the coordinated lobbying of USAID to fund the road was not only successful in and of itself, but also served as the first step in turning USAID into an ally.

These advocacy illustrations suggest the wide range of tactics that are available to organizations and individuals in Tecoluca. Collective action can be engaging the Inter American Development Bank to design a loan for resolving longstanding flood vulnerability in the Bajo Lempa, or occupying the San Marcos Lempa bridge in coordinated national protest against trade liberalization policies. Both collective action strategies can not simply be reduced to accommodative or contentious, but are both. The problems that make collective action difficult are not resolved by Hierarchy strategies, but solutions tend to emerge from strong Community norms.

What stands out among ARENA mayors in the Jiboa Valley is the lack of autonomy among local officials to participate in local advocacy initiatives. The notion of political advocacy is tightly restricted by party hierarchy (COENA), preventing bottom-up initiatives from galvanizing participation. While allied donors (GTZ) recognize ARENA intransigence to decentralization, most are reluctant to sponsor contentious advocacy measures, preferring to counsel accommodating engagement despite the apparent inefficacy of these efforts. Consequently, most incipient protest mobilizations (water project dissent in *San Pedro Aguas Calientes* and *La Entrevista beneficio* contamination) have been as ineffective as the conventional lobbying for an improved road or hot springs-tourism complex.

In San Ildefonso, the absence of strong ties to either the insurgent or counter-insurgent mobilization network has resulted in passive participation in contentious and conventional advocacy initiatives driven by both. The Fonchano community representatives have remained on the sidelines of the advocacy campaigns associated with the San Vicente Productivo ratification by the CDD, the Lempa Acahuapa water user association dispute, agrarian debt and indemnification for the civil patrollers.

Advocacy capacity may represent the most profound distinction between the case studies. Although most local institution officials share the same concerns about the challenges to

decentralized development, the expectations held for them by their respective populations are different and deeply rooted in past political experiences.

Table 9.9 summarizes the Institutional Level Empowerment Achievements for the three case study municipalities. Of the fourteen indicators, nine are drawn from the 1998 regional survey data, three from reported municipal development finance data, and the final three measuring institutional accountability, transparency and coordination are derived from participant observation in local development and governance processes. Local institutional performance in Tecoluca is rated highest in ten of the fourteen indicators, compared to two in the Jiboa Valley and two indicators for which the differences in the means are not statistically significant.

Perhaps one of the more surprising outcomes involves the absence of a statistically significant difference among NGO assessments. The performance of NGOs in Tecoluca appear to rated as less satisfactory than both Jiboa Valley or San Ildefonso. This is surprising because NGOs and INGOs have been a significant factor in the level of coordination and resource mobilization achieved in Tecoluca. The fact that these same NGOs and INGOs do not receive as favorable an evaluation from the beneficiary population adds weight to the arguments outlined in chapter seven regarding the ambiguous development impact of NGOs in El Salvador.

The national government agency performance is given the highest scores by the Jiboa Valley residents, although the difference in means for the entire index is not statistically significant. Despite the evidence of government or party responsibility for political interference, low participation, and poor coordination, a higher proportion of residents in municipalities historically tied to the government view their primary benefactor. Still, government agencies receive by far the lowest performance scores.

In sum, the institutional empowerment indicators summarized in Table 9.9 outline the sharp differences in local institutional performance, both perceived and concrete.

Table 9.9 Indicators and Data Sources for Institutional Level Empowerment/Disempowerment Achievements

Meso/Inter-Institutional Level	Data Source	Survey Mean	JV	T	SF	Sig
1. Local Government Performance	Index of three performance assessment questions (below) [0-10]	4.7	4.8	5.2	4.1	.000
Performance Local Govt	Percent reporting that they were treated well or very well in dealing with LG P3.10	59.1	43.3	83.6	50	
Performance Local Govt	Percent reporting that municipal services are good or excellent P3.11	37.1	37.3	51.9	28.5	
Representation Local Govt	Percent that say mayor is somewhat or very interested in local participation to resolve community problems, P3.12	45.1	43	62.9	32.1	
2. Performance Local Govt	Percent that report willingness to pay more local taxes in order to improve local services P3.15	40.8	41.2	49.3	41.3	
3. Representation Local Govt	Percent that say LG responds to local needs always or most of the time P3.16	23.3	21.5	44	11.5	
4. Representation Local Govt (n=367)	Percent that say all sectors are represented in the cabildo abiertos most of the time P3.6	23.5	19.2	37.6	23.0	
5. National Govt. Performance	Index of three performance assessment questions (below) [0-10]		4.0	3.5	3.6	NS
Performance National Govt	Percent reporting that they were treated well or very well in dealing with agency of National Government P4.6	54.9	51.6	46.4	33.3	
Performance National Govt	Percent reporting that municipal services are good or excellent P4.7	20.9	17.6	18	16.4	
Representation National Govt	Percent that say government is somewhat or very interested in local participation to resolve community problems, P4.8	28.9	25.3	21.5	21	
6. Representation National Govt	Percent that principal beneficiaries of government programs are the poor or everyone p4.9 (rather than the rich or government functionaries)	21.1	21	17.1	16.1	
7. NGO Performance Index	Index of three performance assessment questions (below) [0-10]		7.5	6.9	7.4	NS
Performance NGO	Percent reporting that they were treated well or very well in dealing with NGO P5.7	83.9	100	73.6	82.6	
Performance NGO	Percent reporting that NGO services are good or excellent P5.8	76.6	90	64.4	76.1	
Representation NGO	Percent that say NGO is somewhat or very interested in local participation to resolve community problems, P5.9	87.8	85.7	84.3	95.5	
8. Representation NGO	Percent that say principal beneficiaries of NGO assistance are the poor or everyone P5.10	89.3	93.1	81.3	91.7	
9. Resource Mobilization 1	Local tax effort (Minimum percent exceeded expected tax collection performance based on Gallagher model (2000).	Na	56%	335 %	63%	
10. Resource Mobilization 2	Local tax per capital	Na	2.0	7.8	1.7	
11. Resource Mobilization 3	Diversity of Municipal Finance (% of total development resources represented by state transfers	Na	23.5	10	15.5	
12. Accountability	Qualitative (Low, Low-Moderate, Moderate, Moderate-High, High) based on participatory observation of municipal meetings		L-M	M-H	L	
13. Transparency	Qualitative- Access to Available documentation		L	M	L	
14. Coordination	Qualitative: based on participatory observation in inter-municipal, inter-institutional and town level meetings.		M	H	L	

F. CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has intended to demonstrate is that decentralization, defined as the devolution of resources and authority to local actors and increased participation in local politics, tends to reinforce already existing distributions of power when democratic institutions are weak and local inequality is high. Under such conditions, decentralization works (empowerment is achieved) when local actors acquire capital resources and use them effectively to overcome collective action problems and contest prevailing inequality. Effective use of resources to contest prevailing inequality requires the capacity for both contentious and conventional collective action. Moreover, decentralization disempowers local actors to the extent that on their own they are unable to overcome collective action problems to seriously contest prevailing inequality through conventional or contentious means.

To test this argument for empowerment at the institutional level, I compare local performance in the three municipal cases focusing on three key areas of local governance: inter-municipal cooperation, inter-institutional coordination within municipal cases, and participation, transparency and accountability in local resource mobilization. I find that decentralization has worked most effectively where the post-war expectations for development have guided local institutions according to a challenging, bottom-up empowerment through conflict strategy. Local institutions have performed poorly under decentralization when post-war expectations tend to prefer a stabilizing, top-down empowerment by invitation strategy. These competing notions of empowerment have in turn have deeply marked the institutionalization of local authority in NGOs, municipal governments and their articulation with social safety net programs. Tecoluca, the municipal case representing insurgent political experiences, demonstrates the collective capacity to confront and transform local inequality as a pre-requisite for sustainable local economic development. Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso, the municipal cases of hard-line and moderate counter-insurgent political experiences, demonstrate imposed or individualist

approaches to local development that are more acquiescent to high inequality and suggest continuity with pre-war agrarian relations.

The summary of trends in public finance reveals that centralization has expanded new local opportunities for resource mobilization, but has failed to compensate for significant and persistent biases against public investment in local economic development in rural areas. Local actors have little choice but to coordinate on various levels to find solutions to this resource mobilization challenge. However, the analysis of the local politics of inter-municipal coordination in San Vicente nevertheless points to the inherent pitfalls of decentralization. Efforts to strengthen municipal government through departmental coordination mechanisms have been susceptible to political capture in a setting of high inequality. Hierarchy strategies by ARENA party elites have effectively blocked FMLN efforts to coordinate and advance a progressive political agenda in the San Vicente mayors' council.

This inherent vulnerability to decentralization is visible at the inter-institutional level within each municipal case. Variation in density, ideological diversity and transnational reach of the respective institutional fields suggest the different challenges that actors in each of the three cases must surmount to achieve institutional coordination. Comparison of the Tecoluca municipal development council, the Jiboa Valley microregion and the failure to achieve any coordinating mechanism in San Ildefonso illustrates how past political experiences have shaped each coordination effort. Although in no case was coordination especially effective, the CDM in Tecoluca included a wider diversity of participants, encompassed a more profound discussion of the structural obstacles to local development, and a consideration of a more ambitious menu of advocacy strategies. The Jiboa Valley microregion has achieved little when confronted by the parochial self-interests of the competing mayors or the limitations imposed by ARENA party elites. A higher premium placed on the collective interest in Tecoluca explains why the CDM in Tecoluca has been sustained while coordination in the other cases have been unable to overcome political capture.

A comparison of the *cabildo abierto* across the municipal cases further reveals how competing empowerment strategies have aligned the performance of this participatory mechanism to insurgent and counter-insurgent expectations for local institutions. In Tecoluca, a higher and more intense level of citizen participation, moderately greater transparency regarding local financial information and concrete strides toward participatory budget making have

resulted in a more diverse, stable and increasing resource mobilization achievement than either of the other two municipal governments. The sum of the evidence underscores fundamental differences in the insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies. The performance of local institutions in Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso suggest that the legacy of counter-insurgent political experiences is the persistence of Hierarchy or Market collective action strategies – neither of which has proven particularly effective in confronting the threat of political capture. Tecoluca, by contrast, has demonstrated the capacity for Contract and Community collective action strategies that are more associated with participatory and accountable local governance, and the institutional coordination so necessary for overcoming the challenges to local development in El Salvador.

Lichbach warns us that “appeals to participatory democracy within dissident groups typically fail.” (1998: 269). The dissident leaders themselves are well positioned for the political capture of the organizations or movement resources and goals. The evidence marshaled here shows the opposite to be true, both in terms of the insurgent case of Tecoluca as in the converse expectation that greater participatory democracy is more likely in the counter-insurgent cases of San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley.

Perhaps the evidence of institutional level empowerment summarized in this chapter only points to idiosyncrasy of Tecoluca? If so, the performance of local institutions would be interesting but the lessons would be of limited general utility. The charismatic leadership qualities of Nicolás García as the first two term FMLN mayor might also be responsible for the described outcomes. It would be incorrect to suggest that García’s leadership skills were not in part responsible for Tecoluca’s success, but the analysis has demonstrated that he is not alone in shouldering the adoptive responsibilities of meeting the revolutionary expectations for economic development and local governance. The durability of Tecoluca’s governance model suggests that local institutions and mobilization network have required the decentralization of local authority to old and new leaders, just as the insurgent experience has always done. Tecoluca institutions perform better because the once concentrated power held by a handful of landowners has been redistributed along with their assets to many citizens that now use those assets to exercise relevant control over local decision making.

Similarly, the durability of choices and expectations that explain the preferred leadership of Juan Cerritos as an ARENA/PCN mayor in the Jiboa Valley, or the splintered and weak

loyalties that have endorsed Maria Julia Costanza and Orlando Arevalo in San Ildefonso, also demonstrate that the continuity of pre-war inequality and disempowerment are also deeply rooted.

Of course, none of the three municipalities is monolithic. Each reflects the deep political polarization that characterizes El Salvador today. Perhaps the level of inclusivity of Tecoluca's local economic development experience is its crowning achievement. However, the true test of the generalizability of Tecoluca's achievements would be to compare the empowerment qualities beyond the municipality. In the next chapter, I test the uniqueness of Tecoluca's successful insurgent empowerment strategy by comparing the effect of its core distinctive attribute – its insurgent political experience, on the individual level empowerment indicators across the entire paracentral survey sample.

X. CHAPTER TEN: EMPOWERED INSURGENTS: THE IMPACT OF PAST POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

A. INTRODUCTION

El Salvador, like much of Latin America, has decentralized government on the premise that local actors are empowered to act collectively to hold local institutions more accountable than remote, centralized state agencies. However, improved governance through decentralization depends upon the distribution of power that exists *ex ante* at the local level. When democracy is unconsolidated and inequality is high, decentralization may only reinforce inequality and increase the probability for political capture of public goods provision. El Salvador represents a crucial case for testing this hypothesis. The country's twelve-year civil war was caused in large part by the unequal distribution of land.

Throughout the war, the Salvadoran countryside was governed by two parallel states, two political-economic systems, and two competing conceptions of citizen empowerment. In zones under the control of the FMLN, insurgents challenged local inequality by decentralizing power from the bottom-up. By contrast, counter-insurgent decentralization strategies stabilized inequality from the top-down in zones under the control of the Salvadoran government. These competing political experiences have had an important contextual impact on the varied effectiveness of post-war local development programs.

Building upon the accumulated evidence of societal and meso-institutional empowerment presented in the preceding chapters, I continue to sort out the empirical evidence of post-war decentralized development to illustrate my definition of empowerment, focusing on individual level indicators of the three core dimensions – **Resources, Agency and Achievements**. Resources are **human, social, economic, and political capital** - the pre-conditions for authentic

development choices and the control levers of sustained capital acquisition. As illustrated in Chapter nine, collective action (agency) is necessary to convert into achievements – defined by Sen as valued ways of being and doing that a person has managed to accomplish. Through agency, resources are converted into achievements that we might associate with a dignified life – the fulfillment of basic needs, voice and participation in social and political action, local problem solving skills and adequate resource mobilization. **Efficacious participation** represents a key indication of empowerment and will serve as the primary dependent variable for individual level analysis in this chapter.

Are the empowering effects of insurgent political experience found in Tecoluca unique or can we make broader claims about past insurgent and counter-insurgent experiences? In order to further isolate the effect of political experience during the war on post-war empowerment outcomes, the unit of analysis will shift in this chapter from the case study municipal population to a recategorization of political experience, ranging from hard-line insurgent to hard-line counterinsurgent. Based on survey data from the 1998 paracentral region survey, I compare objective attributes and behaviors of local insurgent or counter-insurgent political experience to establish an index for comparing participation across all communities in the survey. Decentralized individual or collective action strategies (contentious or accommodative participation) are expected to differ with respect to the past political experiences.

This view of local politics is informed by classic explanations of participation that have focused on individual socio-economic and social-psychological factors.⁹⁸³ Efficacious participation refers here to the capability to take part in the social and political life of one's community. In terms of indicators, I will focus both on actions (voting, organizational affiliation, activism in local development committees and the workplace, attempts and outcomes of contacting public officials, and the collective solving of day to day local problems) as well as the mediating attitudes that give these actions meaning (individual and collective efficacy, trust, aspirations, and optimism). I also explore the link between conventional and unconventional participatory modes of action (protest marches, property and land occupations, violence to property, riots, collective insurgency).

⁹⁸³ A sample of the most influential work on conventional participation is extensive Almond and Verba (1965), Verba and Nie (1972) Milbrath (1965) Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995).

By introducing political experience as an independent contextual variable that captures historically and structurally rooted variation in conflictive roles, I hope to correct for an underspecification of these factors in explanations of political and social participation. Political participation models also have not adequately explored the link between conventional modes and unconventional modes.⁹⁸⁴ Indeed, a central proposition of the empowerment by invitation logic in El Salvador holds that conventional and unconventional modes of participation are mutually exclusive. The empowerment through conflict path calls for a repertoire of collective action that allows citizens to be active protesters as well as active voters.

Finally, the field of political activity in El Salvador does not permit the unreflective transportation of concepts and constructs that are prominent in U.S. political science. In poor, rural societies, citizens writing letters to express an opinion or making campaign contributions donation are equally rare. However, people do express their opinions verbally in meetings and through other informal activities. Voluntary contributions may come in the form of joining an electoral caravan, handing out leaflets, preparing refreshments for an event. Given limited resources, informal activities such as making demands on local authorities, attendance and participation at municipal meetings, or pitching in to solve a local problem take on greater political significance. Moreover, while the act of voting in national elections may be the easiest political activity to measure, it may not be the most empowering activity. In many rural communities, involvement (including voting) in local development committees, the workplace, visits to offices of public agencies, and the individual or collective solving of day to day local problems are equally, if not more relevant expressions of empowerment at the most basic level. While decentralized development prioritizes these activities as the wellsprings of more efficient and effective governance, an exclusively local optic would also be flawed. A focus on local activism should not lose sight of the inherent and necessary relationship between local activism and the role of a responsive national government in generating sustainable development initiatives.

If decentralization tends to strengthen the distribution of power that exists *ex ante* at the local level, we should find efficacious participation to be the highest where power asymmetries

⁹⁸⁴ Studies of unconventional political participation have devoted greater attention to the linkage between conventional and unconventional modes, including Gamson (1968, 1975), Gurr (1970, 1993) Seligson (1980), Muller & Seligson (1987)

have been historically leveled. In counter-insurgent contexts of high inequality, stabilizing, top-down decentralization tends to empower local elites almost exclusively, just as it fragments local interests and exacerbates local capacity for collective action. As illustrated in the previous chapter, under these conditions the chances of political capture are high. A result of the top-down approach, levels of participation in local development will tend to be low, individualized, avoiding sustained contentious action, and lacking a sense of efficacy.

In contexts of relative greater equity, challenging, bottom-up decentralization under conditions of improving local equity tends to empower a wider cross-section of people and further reduces the obstacles to collective action. Decentralized participation from the bottom-up will be more participatory, combine both conventional and contentious modes of action, involve more collective effort, and generate a greater sense of efficacy among the participants.

The chapter will be organized as follows: I first provide an outline of the two competing approaches to decentralization in El Salvador, which informs the survey design and selection of the case study municipalities. In section two, I explain the construction of my contextual variable - political experience. I then review the survey evidence comparisons of individual level empowerment indicators between municipal cases and cohorts clustered by political experience across the entire paracentral region. Section three uses OLS and logistical regressions to illustrate the durability of political experience in explaining both conventional and contentious participation. In the final section, I discuss the implications for the dissertation hypotheses.

In this chapter, I measure empowerment at the individual level by the intensity and form of participation in post-war decentralized development projects (formal and informal community activism and contentious protest). Comparisons of the levels of participation between representative insurgent and counter-insurgent communities in one of El Salvador's ex-conflictive regions based on the results of an original 1998 survey clearly illustrate the impact of competing decentralization strategies. I find that 1) decentralization reforms are associated with the highest levels of efficacious participation where local land inequality and associated power relations have been leveled – in insurgent FMLN communities. 2) Political experiences of bottom-up, contentious decentralization linked with the social and economic contexts of FMLN zones of influence prove to be a durable predictor of efficacious participation across the entire region.

B. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The primary independent variable of this study is a contextual effect derived from wartime conflictive experiences. Many Salvadoran communities that today live side by side in the paracentral region had very different experiences of political socialization during the war. These political experiences may be located in terms of their commitments to the FMLN or the ARENA led government of El Salvador. In this section, I measure insurgent and counter-insurgent political experiences as scale variables composed of the sum of a five factor weighted objective and subjective community level indicators that reflect the context of past political choices.

From a methodological standpoint, the construction of a political experience index variable and other scale variables are preferable to single question indicators because they reduce the chances of systematic measurement errors. To assure that each scale item is measuring the same conceptual dimension, varimax rotated component factor analysis is used to test the reliability of this scale variable as single factor indicators. Cronbach's Alpha statistic, which determines the level of compatibility of the different scale components as a single aggregated index, is reported for each scale variable. The maximum value of Alpha is 1, but values over 0.70 are considered to have adequate reliability as a single indicator (Knoke and Bohrnstedt 1994: 268).

Scale variables constructed of multiple survey questions also face the problem of missing values. To avoid losing entire cases when 1 or 2 questions of a scale of four or more questions are computed, a method to allow for the mean values to be imputed for the missing responses is used. This is done only when two or fewer responses are missing, otherwise the case is dropped from the estimate of the unit mean. When Alpha statistics for scale variables are high, this procedure for imputing values for missing cases is considered valid.

I turn now to the construction of the political experience context variable. In Table 10.1, I list the five variables that were used to distinguish between insurgent and counter-insurgent

political experience, as well as the means for each indicator and the grand mean score for each of 69 surveyed communities (several smaller communities are grouped together from the original list of 98). The five indicators include community location on conflict map, total land transferred to FMLN PTT beneficiaries, percent of reported vote for FMLN in the 1997 municipal elections, the ratio of FMLN ex-combatants to total survey responses, and the number of FMLN NGOs reported to be active in the community. For all indicators, high values are consistent with an FMLN insurgent political context.

The political experience index represents a contextual property rather than an exclusively individual property, although several individual level attributes are central to its construction. The variable connotes a specific political experience that has been described in prior chapters under the labels of insurgent or counter-insurgent to individuals now living within a community that shares certain fundamental attributes that we might associate with one or the other. The attribution of prior political experiences to post hoc features rests on several basic assumptions that deserve some justification.

The effectiveness of post-war decentralization depends upon a facilitative context for both conventional and contentious collective actions that challenge rather than stabilize local inequality. This facilitative context is informed by the past political experiences. Whether insurgent or counter-insurgent, these political experiences represent what some analysts have defined as, “the complex product of an individual’s own characteristics in combination with the characteristics and predispositions of other surrounding individuals.” (Huckfeldt, Plutzer, and Sprague 1993: 366) The attitudes or behaviors of any single individual will be constrained or reinforced by the surrounding contextual history of support given to the FMLN, to the Armed Forces or government, or efforts to avoid collaborating with either side. This composite of attitudes and accumulated behavioral experiences represent a degree of continuity or rupture with pre-war social structures and their associated belief system that has shaped post-war local institutions.⁹⁸⁵

This notion of political experience is inherently collective and portable. In other words, the composite of similar or different individual experiences over the past three decades that I

⁹⁸⁵ On the measurement and analysis of context variables, see Huckfeldt (1986), Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987), Cook, Jelen and Wilcox (1993), Huckfeldt, Sprague and Plutzer (1993), Banaszak and Plutzer (1993), Gibson and Gouws (2001).

want to measure is rooted in relationships between individuals, rather than the individual attributes by themselves. That shared history of political experience can be transported from one geographic location to another, say from a refugee camp in Honduras to a repatriated community in the Lower Lempa valley or from among a scattered displaced population through individual reoccupation strategies to communities of origin. While geography is one item that helps identify political experience (for reasons that I explain below), it is not wholly determinative. More important are the shared beliefs about fairness, equality, or rights and the histories of wartime participation that some, but not all, hold and associate with each other.

There are several conceptual drawbacks to this method, which must be recognized. First, the survey did not ask the respondents to directly report or elaborate on their history or degree of participation in insurgent or counter-insurgent activities. This type of question was considered too sensitive for survey research in an ex-conflictive zone where the politics surrounding the war remain unsettled. Instead, it was decided that indirect indicators, derived from both survey and non-self reported data, would provide a preferable and adequate construct. The most direct measure was a specific question that asked people to identify their status as an FMLN ex-combatant, Armed Forces non-combatant, PTT beneficiary or FMLN base, and civil defense. Nearly a quarter of the sample responded affirmatively to this question (214 of 912). A critical mass presence of any of these participant types is one of the central features of a community's political experience.

Another concern is whether this conception provides sufficient analytical space for the choice of political neutrality.⁹⁸⁶ Indeed, my analysis in prior chapters underscores the fact that only a small minority of the Salvadoran population actually participated as combatants or active collaborators in the conflict. Most of the populations located in highly conflictive zones, such as the one in this study, were only passive collaborators with one or both sides. That is to say that the provision or not of food and water or information about the enemy was motivated by the threat of sanction rather than the promise of some benefit or moral belief. While the category of political expansion zone is imprecise, it is intended to encompass individuals and communities that were caught in the middle and uncommitted to either side, without specifying the degree of collaboration or active non-participation. Nearly all territory in the paracentral zone was

⁹⁸⁶ I am grateful to Elizabeth Wood and William Barnes for pointing out this concern.

contested, which meant that explicit non-participatory neutrality was virtually impossible. The absence of space for neutrality in the paracentral region was one of the factors for the massive depopulation of the zone. While emigration might reflect the only true choice associated with neutrality in the region for obvious reasons, it was not possible to survey those people who had emigrated.⁹⁸⁷

Population shifts lead to the second concern related to the other challenge posed by the massive displacement and recent repopulation. It might questioned whether any person that now lives in a community necessarily experienced the features of an insurgent or government oriented political culture for any significant period of time. In other words, where people live now may not tell us where or how they might have lived before or during the war if they were displaced.⁹⁸⁸ There are several reasons why this problem is minimized. Nearly two thirds of the surveyed respondents stayed in their current community during the war, and the other third were either combatants (7.3%), were displaced to nearby communities (12.7%) or beyond (14.5%). Only 20% of the communities surveyed involved a transformation of the original population or the establishment of entirely new communities, and the vast majority of these were located in zones historically controlled by the FMLN.⁹⁸⁹ This means that 80% of the communities were represented by a majority original population, with varying degrees of resettlement. Within the new FMLN communities, the coordination of land occupations and refugee resettlement by the military leadership of the insurgency ensured that most residents shared the political experiences associated with the insurgency. It is therefore safe to assume that the people interviewed in 1998 would accurately reflect the political experiences that were largely representative of these communities, original or new.

Table 10.1 provides a statistical breakdown of the diversity of political experiences between and within municipalities. For each of the 69 community clusters, the means for each of

⁹⁸⁷ The percent of families receiving remittances now might offer a rough indication of where migration was highest, e.g. in San Ildefonso.

⁹⁸⁸ Close to a third of the Salvadoran population was displaced during the war. FMLN control zones, in particular, involve massive resettlements. The post-war composition of communities sometimes differ considerably from pre-war compositions. With this in mind, these geographical boundaries offer a reasonable accurate locator of political experiences.

⁹⁸⁹ A variable for community change has a moderately positive and significant correlation with FMLN control and expansion with respect to political experience.

the five subcomponents, the raw total score and the political experience code are listed. The estimated political experience raw scores range from a low of 0 for Cantón San Benito of Guadalupe municipality to 12.2 of a maximum 12.4 in the Cantón La Sabana of Tecoluca municipality (which also served as one of the FMLN demobilization points). Within several municipalities, there are scores of insurgent and counter-insurgent communities that are differentiated by a range of 8-11 points. By contrast, Jiboa Valley reflects very little variation – with almost all of the communities as government controlled zone. This variation in political experiences underscores how the war has polarized local politics in El Salvador. I turn now to the specific variables that comprise the political experience scale.

Two of the five indicators of the political experience score are derived from secondary sources, the other three are derived from the 1998 survey responses. The Conflict Zone Map Code is the first indicator of a community's past political experience. For each community, which constitutes one or several *cantónes* of a municipality (typically a population of between 500-5000 people) I assign the communities a score on a scale of 1 to 4 based upon their location on maps of conflictive zones that distinguish between FMLN and GOES controlled territory and zones of expansion during the war. Figure 5.1 (map of insurgent and counter-insurgent control and contested zones in the paracentral region) provides one illuminating example of these boundaries for El Salvador that identifies three types of conflictive zones in 1989. A map code score of 4 is associated with an FMLN control zone, which signifies established presence of FMLN combatants, their social support infrastructure, and a political-military system of authority. Figure 5.1 suggests three large contiguous zones of FMLN control, located in the paracentral region, with a fourth to the southeast. A map code of 3 indicates new zones of FMLN operations, or expansion zones where base level recruitment of combatants and collaborators was ongoing late in the war. Zones of contested influence signify relative areas of GOES military and political expansion subject to frequent attacks by the FMLN. White areas on the map indicate least disputed zones of GOES control, where the military's authority is relatively unchallenged.

For the paracentral zone, I have cross-checked and refined Figure 2.2 (originally published in Montgomery 1995) by drawing on historical testimony and document analysis to

more precisely locate communities according to geo-political boundaries.⁹⁹⁰ FMLN control signifies established presence of FMLN combatants, their social support infrastructure, and a political-military system of authority. FMLN control zones in the paracentral region are located in northern San Vicente, the *Chinchontepec* volcano region, the Lempa valley-foothill region that covers parts of Usulután and San Vicente, the Eastern Pacific Coast area of Jucuarán, and the coffee highlands between Santiago de Maria, Usulután and Chinameca, San Miguel. New areas of FMLN operations signify expansion zones where base level recruitment of combatants and collaborators was ongoing late in the war. Contested or disputed areas signify relative zones of GOES military and political expansion despite frequent attacks by the FMLN. White areas on the map indicate least disputed zones of GOES control, where the military's authority is relatively unchallenged. However, Figure 2.2 is incorrect in designating large parts of Tecoluca (in the lower central (Bajo Lempa) region of San Vicente) as GOES control zone.

The conflict map code variable is grounded in the objective reality of the war. However, a map only refers to controlled or disputed territory and reveals less about the political composition of these community populations. A second objective variable is the total area of land transferred to FMLN beneficiaries of the Land Transfer Program of the Peace Accords in each community. The transferred amounts per community are converted to a scale of 0 to 5. Each number signifies a range of land transferred (0-99 ha., 100-299 ha., 300-499 ha., 500-999 ha., 1000 ha. and higher). Recall that over 40% of the agricultural workforce benefited from PTT in Tecoluca, compared to only 8% and 0% of farmers in San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley, respectively.

The first subjective indicator is vote preference in the 1997 local elections. Vote preferences are derived from the percentage of surveyed respondents in each community who voted for either the FMLN, ARENA or a third party. A low score of 1 signifies that 50% or more of those reported their preference, voted for ARENA. A high score of 5 signifies that the 50% or more of those reporting their preference, voted for the FMLN. The intermediate scores

⁹⁹⁰ These boundaries were based on careful historical reconstruction of the events and biographies of the war and post-war periods as well as interviews with ex-combatants and civilians who reside in or fought in those communities, as well as analysis of the literature chronicling the events of the conflict in the paracentral zone. Published sources for identification of FMLN control and expansion zones include Benitez-Manaut (1989), Montgomery (1995), Lungo (1998), PRISMA (1996), and Murray (1995). Other maps referenced here include Benitez (1989:191), UNDP (1993:4, 50-52), Ventura (1983), Pearce (1986:viii), Medina Nuñez (1990: 96), Americas Watch (1991), SALPRESS (1985), Fuerzas Armadas de El Salvador (1986), and CISPES (1989).

of 2 and 3 signify 25-50% for either party and 3 signifies a vote distribution that gives no party more than 25% of the reported votes.

Table 10.1 Definition and Measurement of Political Experience: Community Level Context (Community Means)

Municipality	Canton	No. Persons Surveyed	Conflict Zone Map Code (1-4)	PTT Land transferred to FMLN (0-10)	Vote % for FMLN 1997 Election (1-5)	FMLN ex-combatants per capita (0-1)	FMLN NGOs active in canton (0-2)	Canton Political Experience Raw Score (0-12.4)	Political Experience Survey Code
			1=Govt Control 2=Govt. Expan 3=FMLN Expan 4=FMLN Control	0=0 ha. 1=1-99 ha. 2=100-299 ha. 3=300-499 ha. 4=500-999 ha. 5=>1000 ha.	1 >= 50% Arena 3 - even split 5 >=50% Fmln	FMLN ex-combatants as % of canton population	0 = 0 NGOs 1= (1-2 NGOs) 2=>(2NGOs)	0 (Min) = Counter-Insurgent 12.44 (Max) = Insurgent	1: (0-3.11) 2: (3.11-6.22) 3: (6.22-9.33) 4: (9.33-12.44)
Guadalupe	San Benito	6	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
	San Emigdio	16	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	1.00
	Guadalupe Casco	17	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	1.00
	<i>Guadalupe Total</i>	39	1.00	0.00	1.67	0.00	0.00	0.55	1.00
Verapaz	San Pedro Agua Calientes	9	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.11	0.00	1.75	1.00
	Molineres - San Antonio Jiboa	15	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	Verapaz Casco	16	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	<i>Verapaz Total</i>	40	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.04	0.00	1.68	1.00
Tepetitán	Concepcion Canas - La Virgen	15	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	2.46	1.00
	Tepetitán Casco - Antig Tepetitán	23	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	<i>Tepetitán Total</i>	38	1.50	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	2.06	1.00
San Cayetano	Candelaria Abajo y Arriba	14	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	2.46	1.00
	Cerro Grande	8	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	3.27	1.00
	San Cayetano Casco	16	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	<i>San Cayetano Total</i>	38	1.67	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	2.19	1.00
Tecoluca	Las Anonas - La Sabana	12	4.00	5.00	5.00	0.75	2.00	12.22	4.00
	Los Naranjos - Sta Marta	14	4.00	5.00	5.00	0.64	2.00	12.12	4.00
	Pacun	13	4.00	2.00	3.00	0.15	2.00	7.57	3.00
	Taura-San Carlos	6	4.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	10.82	4.00
	San Nicolas	14	3.00	1.00	4.00	0.00	1.00	5.77	2.00
	San Pedro + El Vaquerano	9	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	2.00	4.99	2.00
	Nueva Amanacer	8	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	1.00	4.13	2.00
	La Florida-El Socorro	11	3.00	4.00	5.00	0.73	2.00	10.57	4.00
	Guajoyo-Gran Sasso	12	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.83	2.00	10.66	4.00
	Santa Monica - Angulo	11	4.00	4.00	5.00	0.73	2.00	11.38	4.00
	Llano Grande-El Arco	16	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.06	0.00	3.33	2.00
	Tecoluca Casco	19	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.05	2.00	4.23	2.00
	Nuevo Tehuacan	10	4.00	1.00	4.00	0.20	1.00	6.77	3.00
	<i>Tecoluca Total</i>	155	3.54	2.23	4.00	0.40	1.62	8.11	3.00
San Ildefonso	Maradiaga-Divisadero-Palmeras	17	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	Cumiste-Lajas	15	1.00	2.00	3.00	0.00	1.00	4.14	2.00
	Guachipilin-Sihuetepeque	14	3.00	1.00	4.00	0.29	1.00	6.03	2.00
	San Francisco de la Cruz	10	3.00	0.00	5.00	0.60	2.00	7.19	3.00
	Las Canoas-El Limon-Los Almendros	16	3.00	3.00	4.00	0.81	2.00	9.01	3.00
	San Pablo Canales	8	3.00	2.00	3.00	0.13	2.00	6.74	3.00
	Quebracho	9	1.00	0.00	4.00	0.22	0.00	2.68	2.00
	El Jicaro-Guarumas	8	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	2.00
	San Ildefonso Casco	22	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.05	0.00	0.87	1.00
	<i>San Ildefonso Total</i>	119	1.89	0.89	3.33	0.23	0.67	4.16	2.00
Apastepeque	Las Minas	8	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	2.46	1.00
	El Zaite-San Jose Almendros	15	3.00	2.00	3.00	0.13	1.00	5.88	2.00
	Apastepeque Casco	9	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	2.00
	<i>Apastepeque Total</i>	32	2.00	0.67	3.00	0.04	0.33	3.33	2.00
San Sebastian	La Labor-Aguacayo	12	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	3.27	1.00
	El Paraiso	8	3.00	0.00	4.00	0.13	2.00	5.93	2.00
	San Sebastian Casco	10	2.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	1.00	4.97	2.00
	<i>San Sebastian Total</i>	30	2.33	0.00	3.67	0.04	0.67	3.89	2.00
San Vicente	Achichilco-San Antonio Caminos	15	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	1.00	3.32	2.00
	Chucuyo-La Galera	14	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.21	0.00	1.83	1.00
	Col. Jiboa-San Diego	12	3.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.10	2.00
	Flores suburban	16	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.64	1.00
	San Vicente Casco	28	1.00	0.00	4.00	0.04	1.00	3.37	2.00
	<i>San Vicente Total</i>	85	1.80	0.00	3.00	0.05	0.40	2.69	1.00

Table 10.1 continued

Municipality	Canton	No. Persons Surveyed	Conflict Zone Map Code (1-4)	PTT Land transferred to FMLN (0-10)	Vote % for FMLN 1997 Election (1-5)	FMLN ex-combatants per capita (0-1)	FMLN NGOs active in canton (0-2)	Canton Political Experience Raw Score (0-12.4)	Political Experience Survey Code
San Pedro Nonualco	San Ramon	9	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	1.00
	La Comunidad	10	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.10	0.00	0.92	1.00
	San Pedro Nonualco	12	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	<i>San Pedro Nonualco Total</i>	31	1.00	0.00	2.33	0.03	0.00	1.13	1.00
Santiago Nonualco	Santa Teresa-Chancuyo	12	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	El Sauce-Hoja de Sal	13	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	Santiago Nonualco Casco	12	1.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.00
	El Chile	8	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	1.00
	<i>Santiago Nonualco Total</i>	45	1.50	0.00	2.75	0.00	0.00	1.85	1.00
Zacatecoluca	Santa Lucia	10	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	3.27	2.00
	Tablas-Hatos delos Reyes- Lomita	20	3.00	2.00	4.00	0.25	2.00	7.68	3.00
	Zacate suburbano	13	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	1.00	4.13	2.00
	Zacatecoluca casco	36	2.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	1.00	4.15	2.00
	<i>Zacatecoluca Total</i>	79	2.50	0.25	3.50	0.06	1.00	4.40	2.00
Jiquilisco	Romero-La Limonera-El Sisiguayo	18	4.00	4.00	5.00	0.94	2.00	11.58	4.00
	California	12	3.00	5.00	4.00	0.42	1.00	9.42	4.00
	Jiquilisco Casco	16	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	1.00	3.32	2.00
	<i>Jiquilisco Total</i>	46	3.00	3.00	4.00	0.45	1.33	8.11	3.00
Berlin	Zapotes-San Lorenzo	15	3.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	4.17	2.00
	Talpetates	13	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.85	2.00	10.67	4.00
	Berlin Casco	16	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	1.00
	<i>Berlin Total</i>	44	2.67	1.33	2.67	0.28	1.33	5.22	2.00
Nueva Granada	Gualcho	9	4.00	5.00	5.00	0.78	1.00	11.39	4.00
	Nueva Carrizal	9	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	3.27	2.00
	Nueva Granada	12	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.64	1.00
	<i>Nueva Granada Total</i>	30	3.00	1.67	3.33	0.26	0.33	5.43	2.00
Jucuapa	Las Marias	12	4.00	4.00	5.00	0.92	2.00	11.56	4.00
	Loma de la Cruz	8	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	2.46	1.00
	Jucuapa Casco	12	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	1.00
	<i>Jucuapa Total</i>	32	2.33	1.33	3.33	0.31	0.67	4.95	2.00
Ozatlan	El Delirio	11	3.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	3.31	2.00
	Ozatlan Casco - Jocote	18	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	1.00
	<i>Ozatlan Total</i>	29	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	0.50	1.25	1.00
	Total	912	2.23	0.00	3.20	0.18	0.70	3.58	2.00

The designation as an insurgent, counter-insurgent, or disputed zone and the inference of an associated insurgent local political culture coincides in part with the political ideology of the party in power locally. In terms of the municipal level results of the most recent elections, the FMLN has governed in Tecoluca for three terms as of 1998.

Two additional indicators measure the presence of FMLN ex-combatants among the local population and the presence of FMLN NGOs or gremios such as CORDES, ASDI, FUNDESA, FUNPROCOOP, FEDECOOPADES, PROCOMES, CRIPDES, FUNDASPAD, SES, ORC, etc. working actively in the community. Scores for NGO density range from 0, 1, or 2 if 2 or more NGOs are noted. Scores for per capital concentration of FMLN ex-combatants refer to the percentage of surveyed respondents that identified themselves as a demobilized ex-combatant or a member of the FMLN base. Scores range from 0 – 1, with a minimum of 0 and an observed maximum of 0.91 for cantón Las Marias, near Jucuapa, 0.85 for Talpetates in Berlín, 0.83 for cantón Guajoyo in Tecoluca and 0.81 for cantón cluster Los Almendros-El Limón - Las Canoas-in San Ildefonso. Higher scores for both indicators suggest local political experiences are most likely associated with the FMLN during the war.

Table 10.2 Political Experience Context – Factor Analysis Component Matrix	
	Component1
Map Code	.810
1997 FMLN Vote	.825
FMLN ex-combat.	.921
FMLN NGOs	.860
FMLN PTT	.816
Extraction Method: Principal Component	

Consistency among the five variables was evaluated using factor analysis, which produced a single factor and estimated relative loadings for each individual indicator (see Table 10.2). An Alpha score of 0.89 suggests the proposed scale variable is reliable. A political experience score for each of the 69

communities in the survey is calculated by summing the five mean factor scores for each community –each weighted by the respective factor loading. I then subtract the value of the minimum score (1.24) to center the range of scores between a lower bound of 0 and an upper bound of 12.44. A high score is associated with insurgent political experiences in zones of FMLN control and expansion (community location in a geographic zone influenced by the FMLN, a high-density FMLN ex-combatants or PTT land, a vote preference for FMLN). A low score indicates counter-insurgent political experiences in zones of GOES control or expansion.

To make comparisons within municipalities, the political experience scores are recoded. The distribution of scores is divided into quartiles (1: 0-3.11) GOES control zone, (2: 3.11-6.22)

GOES expansion zone, (3:6.22-9.33) FMLN expansion zone, (4:9.33-12.44) FMLN control zone. The distribution of political experiences within the case study municipalities is shown in Table 10.3, which shows the distribution of political experience. The Jiboa Valley is skewed almost entirely as a GOES control zone (95%) with only 5% identified as GOES expansion communities where control was contested. Tecoluca is divided between FMLN control (43%), FMLN expansion (15%) and GOES expansion (43%). Here no communities qualified as government controlled. Political experience in San Ildefonso slightly favors GOES control/expansion (60%) and the other highland communities are identified as an insurgent expansion zone (40%). For the entire survey, FMLN control and expansion represent only 26.8% of the respondents, which is consistent with various accounts of the territorial and popular support achieved during the conflict.

Control refers to a population that was most actively collaborating with either the FMLN or GOES/FAES. Expansion refers populations that engaged protagonist forces mostly through passive collaboration, but may have sought political neutrality to the extent possible. Every square inch of the paracentral region was contested politically and militarily throughout the civil war. Neutrality may have been the choice of those who emigrated or died in refusal to fight, but will be indicated here by the expansion zone designation.⁹⁹¹

It might be argued that the context variable is an acceptable measure of past insurgent experiences, but does not adequately represent all past political experiences. The five variables are not perfectly defined as a range in which the maximum value represents a proxy associated with the FMLN and the minimum value represents a proxy associated with hard-line government controlled counter-insurgent communities. However, I will argue that there is some basis for making the claim that these variables will suffice. PTT land can be located in both insurgent and counter-insurgent communities, but tends to be most concentrated in FMLN communities. This is particularly true for cases such as Tecoluca where a significant quota of PTT land was assigned to ex-combatants of the Armed Forces, but very few actually occupy the land and live in the communities. There is a negative and statistically significant correlation of -0.37 between

⁹⁹¹ Expansion zones are admittedly too ambiguous to isolate what are ultimately a variety of modest to zero political commitments to either of the principal protagonists.

the per capita ex-combatant/base member ratio for the FMLN and the Armed Forces/civil patrols. That is to say that where ex-combatants or FMLN base veterans are living, ex-combatants and civil patrol veterans that served in the counter-insurgency tend to be absent. The opposite also tends to be true. Where NGOs aligned with the FMLN are found, right wing NGOs tend to be absent. Finally, the map code assigned to each community based on various sources regarding claims to have held the territory politically also distinguish clearly between insurgent and counter-insurgent poles at each end of the spectrum. So, there is some basis to the claim that this political experience variable does account for the full range of counter-insurgent to insurgent experiences along a continuum, although admittedly imperfect.

Table 10.3 Distribution of Political Wartime Experience within Municipal Cases

	Jiboa Valley	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Secondary Municipalities	Total
FMLN control	0	66 42.6%	0	64 13.3%	130 14.3%
FMLN expansion zone	0	23 14.8%	48 40.3%	43 8.9%	114 12.5%
GOES expansion zone	8 5.2%	66 42.6%	15 12.6%	183 37.9%	272 29.8%
GOES control	147 94.8%	0	56 47.1%	193 40.0%	396 43.4%
Total	155 100%	155 100%	119 100%	483 100%	912 100%

Some examples might illustrate how these attributes stack up. In Tecoluca, despite the prevailing and dominant influence of the FMLN, the communities of San Nicolás, Santa Cruz, and the urban town center, were largely controlled by the military during the war due to their strategic importance bordering highways and proximity of government agencies. FAES garrisons were repeatedly attacked but were never overrun, and civilians were organized into civil defense patrols. Residing in these communities are people who fled other more contested areas and tended to be sympathetic to the government and hostile to the FMLN. Near the highways, but farther from the protection of the garrisons were communities that resisted FMLN requests for collaboration and had family members serving in the military. These communities

were recipients of refugees from neighboring conflict areas, defended cooperatives established under the government agrarian reform, and frequently include demobilized FAES soldiers. In Tecoluca, these characteristics which tilt toward government authority and sympathy describe the communities of Llano Grande, San Pedro and Vaquerano as GOES expansion zones.

The FMLN control zones in Tecoluca were located in the most remote areas - the southeastern slopes of the *Chinchontepec* volcano, the coastal lowlands bordering the Lempa River, and the eastern foothills. In these zones, National Guard posts and FAES garrisons were entirely eliminated by the FMLN by 1984. Many communities were relatively mobile for much of the war, as combatants, militia engaged in direct logistical support for the FPL forces in the zone. Some communities were established in exile, as with refugee camps that were allied with the FPL. El Pacún and Nueva Tehuacán represent two FMLN expansion zone communities because they include a mix of people who actively or passively collaborated with the FMLN, the latter group including resettled refugees from internal refugee camps in San Vicente, demobilized FAES combatants, or original beneficiaries of the “Land to the Tiller” phase of the government land reform. Santa Marta is an example of an FMLN control zone community that is composed of families originally from outside Tecoluca, but formed a new community in a refugee camp established in Sandinista governed Nicaraguan, before repatriating to the coastal village where they now live.

The communities in the Jiboa Valley suffered less political upheaval and fall largely into GOES expansion or control zones. San Ildefonso can be sectioned into four areas, western highland, eastern lowlands, communities bordering the Pan-American Highway, and the town center. Only the first area, which served as an eastern frontier for the concentrations of FMLN combatants in the controlled zones to the West, includes four FMLN expansion zone communities. Los Almendros, now composed of demobilized combatants and the civilian base of the FMLN, is the only control zone community.

In the section that follows, I make two types of comparisons to examine the effect of contextual political experience. I first compare case study municipalities, some of which contain both insurgent and counter-insurgent communities. Next I compare between communities regrouped according to their respective political experience score, which I refer to as insurgent or counter-insurgent control or expansion zones.

C. QUANTITATIVE COMPARISON OF INSURGENT AND COUNTER-INSURGENT EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES

Summarizing evidence drawn primarily from the 1998 regional survey, I turn now to a comparison of the case study municipalities and political experiences in each aspect of the proposed empowerment framework. To what extent can we measure the impact that the processes described in previous chapters have had in terms of the acquisition of capital resources and the conversion of these resources into individual level achievements of meeting basic needs, social and political action; local problem solving and advocacy and resource mobilization? I examine resource acquisition, mediating attitudes and achievements.

1. Resources

Capital stocks are simultaneously inputs and outputs of the empowerment process. Empowerment begins with an initial stock of capital, but generally sustains or increases capital stocks as a consequence in addition to producing other achievements. We are faced with a temporal sequence problem involving the identification of a starting point in the recursive process that leads from resources to achievements. There are also conditions of trade-off, where an increase in one form of capital may necessarily diminish the stock of another form. An increase in economic capital from having a successful occupation may come at the expense of time available to participate in the life of one's community. Conversely, distance from population center or markets may reduce exit options but increase communal ties.

Any cross-sectional analysis of an empowerment process is unable to accurately distinguish between beginning capital resources or achievement capital resources. Data limitations make it impossible to say with certainty whether people are empowered as the outcome of a process, or whether already empowered people determined the outcome of that process. The short time period of observation for most of the rural development interventions in

this study prohibits any clear solution to this methodological problem, except to attempt careful inferences when available data on resource and achievement indicators permit.

A second issue involves the assignment of attitudinal and behavioral variables as resources, intervening factors or achievements. Social ties and collective efficacy, both measured by attitudinal responses to survey questions, are considered to be social and political capital resources, respectively, because they measure the potential availability of two types of communal solidarity typically conducive to local participation. Both indicators could arguably be included as mediating attitudes or possibly even achievements, but address actions that could potentially happen but may not have yet. So too with several attitudinal achievement indicators (political efficacy, satisfaction with local decision making, and perceptions of gender influence), which could arguably be included as intervening attitudes rather than achievements. They are included as achievements because these attitudinal indicators are associated with actions that are likely to have already occurred. While debatable, the assignment is of little consequence to an analysis that does not attempt to model the temporal order of the proposed empowerment process.

Table I.4 in Appendix I lists twenty indicators of capital resources. *Economic capital* is measured in by reported income, land, land that is farmed, Gini index of land distribution, land owned under collective title, remittances, household occupation to family size ratio (dependency index) and indices of household and agricultural asset ownership. Of these indicators, land inequality is the most significant. As noted in chapter eight, the impact of insurgent and counter-insurgent political experiences in the redistribution of land is the foundation for leveling inequality in all other aspects of empowerment resources. Tecoluca has a much lower level of land inequality than San Ildefonso or the Jiboa Valley. The Jiboa Valley reported a higher economic capital stock with income, remittance flows, household and farm assets. Tecoluca has slight advantages in livestock and labor dependency ratios. Collective land ownership reported by over a third of producers in Tecoluca is a vestige of the proindiviso status under which many PTT properties were transferred, but is considered a potential advantage for producers.

Farm size is the single economic indicator favoring San Ildefonso, albeit misleading given the low land quality. Although economic capital stocks favor the Jiboa Valley, the absolute levels are low and indicative of the high rates of extreme poverty in the region.

This pattern generally holds for *human capital*. The mean education level is highest in the Jiboa Valley, both in terms of average adult achievement and the maximum achieved education level within the household – the latter being an indication of possible a positive demonstration effect. However, in terms of ability to name local or national political representatives – considered a proxy for tacit civic knowledge – San Ildefonso is the most informed and Jiboa Valley is the least.

Table I.4 also compares the economic and human capital endowments of the paracentral region survey communities regrouped according to their respective political experiences. In some contrast to municipal averages, the differences in human and economic capital with respect to cohorts of insurgent and counter-insurgent communities are defined more sharply. FMLN control and expansion communities report lower overall incomes, a lower number of household assets and have lower levels of education. FMLN control communities report a lower receipt of remittances and a smaller farm size, although the differences are not statistically significant. On the other hand, FMLN communities report a lower level of land inequality, a lower dependency index, and higher percentage of collective land ownership and higher access to farm assets (although the latter indicator is not significant). The lower economic capital levels in FMLN communities are in part due to a higher dependence on farm related occupations, the newer, more socially reconfigured communities, and lower parent's SES. Together, these indicators strongly suggest that the lower socio-economic status of FMLN communities should predict a lower level of participation and be associated with weaker dispositions toward being able to effectively participate.

Social capital is measured in the context of daily concrete social situations as well as the physical attributes of each community. Survey respondents were first asked to what extent they could count on their neighbors to help in various situations. The index of social ties is based on the sum of responses to four questions which asked, "How willing do you think your neighbors would be to help you in the following ways: watching your children once, watching your children for a week if you needed to leave the community, tending your work if you fell sick, helping you repair the house or bring in a harvest, and lending you money?" Respondents answered on a 1-4 scale of very willing, somewhat willing, somewhat unwilling, and not willing at all. The average scores were summed, and converted to a [0-10] scale, where a higher score

indicates stronger social ties.⁹⁹² San Ildefonso reports the strongest social ties and Jiboa Valley the weakest.

Associational density measures the reported participation in any one of six local organizations (religious, school parents, ADESCO, cooperative, union and other).⁹⁹³ The index reflects the cumulative total of organizations identified in a particular community averaged across each municipal case. Tecoluca and San Ildefonso report 2.6-2.7 organizations per community, compared to only 2.1 in the Jiboa Valley. Finally, the distances to the closest paved road or market are considered proxies for exit options from the community. Proximity to transport routes or population centers tends to diminish reliance on social ties to the community. On average, communities in the Jiboa Valley are located closer to both exit options, and San Ildefonso is two to four times farther away. Based on these four indicators, social capital tends to favor San Ildefonso and would appear to be least in the Jiboa Valley.

Political capital is measured in two ways. First, civic engagement measures the ability to contact authorities to make a request or demand and as such represents political access. The survey asked, “Have you made a request for assistance for the cooperation of the mayor/municipal council, an NGO, some agency of the national government?” Typical municipal or NGO requests ranged from individual transactions (document certification, personal reference or credit) to public requests (specific project proposal or to attend to some community problem). Government requests also included indemnification under programs of the Peace Accords in areas of FMLN influence.

Table I.1 shows the highest level of access is in San Ildefonso for local government and Tecoluca for national government officials or NGOs – this latter indicator is over two times that reported in the Jiboa Valley reflecting the disproportionate absence of NGOs there. When control for political experience is introduced, FMLN control or expansion zones report the highest level of contacts with authorities at all levels, and the difference with other political zones is statistically significant. Of the three types of contacts (municipal, national, and NGO), the higher frequency of contacts within FMLN zones is most pronounced for contacting NGOs. The differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). FMLN communities tend to contact

⁹⁹² The Alpha statistic measuring the reliability of the scale variable is 0.89.

⁹⁹³ Participation in women’s organizations is treated separately below as a political action achievement

government agencies more frequently than GOES communities ($p < 0.01$). However, the strength of the relationship for case study differences in contacting mayors or council members is not statistically significant. We might argue that differences in contacting NGOs between political zones may be a function of the density of organizational presence in each zone. The gap between men and women in FMLN zones of influence remains and is slightly higher than the gap in GOES zones. Yet FMLN women report a higher frequency of contacts with authorities, than men in all other zones.

In general, the intensity of civic engagement is low, with an average of less than one contact of the three institutions per respondent. However, communication with public officials is limited by the lack of telephones and a functioning mail service, as well as the disincentive of losing a day's labor to make the trip to the office of the respective public agency. However, even this level of access to public officials for the 1998 paracentral sample stand out when compared to Salvadoran surveys from other years. Figure 10.1 compares civic engagement levels for the paracentral region for the 1991 San Salvador survey, a 1995, 1998 and 1999 national sample, the paracentral survey reflects a surprisingly more active civil society, for both men and women, than rural cohorts represented in recent national samples.

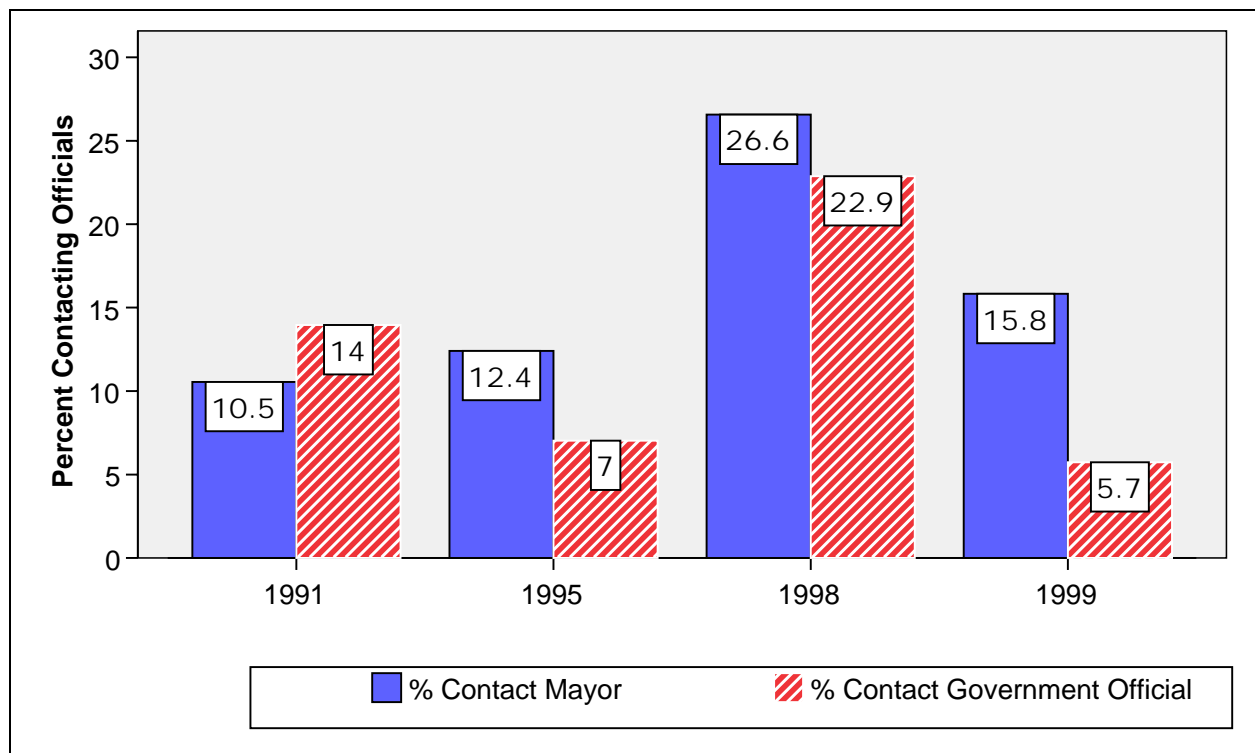


Figure 10.1 Political Capital – Access to Local and National Officials (Paracentral Survey compared to other National Samples)

Collective efficacy is measured by three questions that represent the perceived availability of principled solidarity as a resource for solving political challenges that the community might face. The survey asked two questions regarding the extent to which a person believes that they could count on the support of their neighbors and whether they themselves would opt for joining a local protest to resolve political problems in the community. The first question asks, “If the community confronted a serious problem (such as the excessive cost of electricity or contamination of the community by a nearby business), to what extent your neighbors could be counted on to resolve it? The second one asks, “If the government announced a project that would harm the community and some of your neighbors tried to organize a protest against the project, would you be (very much in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat against, very much against) participating in this activity? Reported responses indicate the percent of those surveyed who would be “very much in favor” of participating in a protest to solve a local problem. A third question asks about opposition with a statement proposing that economic progress would be acceptable even at the expense of short-term inequality - “Some people say that for things to improve economically, some may gain more than others in the short

term.” Respondents were then asked to indicate strong, or partial agreement or disagreement with the proposition.

For all three questions, Tecoluca and FMLN control zone communities in general demonstrate significantly higher levels of collective efficacy. Three out of four Tecolucans would join a protest organized locally, although generalized protest dispositions are high in general - even in the Jiboa Valley. Insurgents appear to enjoy more pronounced communal norms that would facilitate Community collective action strategies for political action. Jiboa Valley and counter-insurgent zone respondents in general report a lower confidence in collective problem solving or inclination to engage in protest against a harmful government project.

Equity demands constitute a radical orientation given the overwhelming free market ideology now prevalent in El Salvador. Equality is considered to have been a principle that was both endorsed and practiced as a revolutionary goal among supporters of the FMLN, and is consistent with the lower land inequality Gini coefficient for FMLN communities. We might have expected Tecoluca and FMLN zones to demonstrate a stronger disagreement with the proposed statement than the results indicate. Yet, strong support for equitable development is lower than 50% in all case study communities, suggesting that individualist strategies prevail. Tecoluca ranks highest in its endorsement of equity, and San Ildefonso ranks lowest.

For the first time, regrouping communities in terms of their political experience does not result in an increase in challenge oriented attitudes for FMLN control zone residents. Support for equitable development falls from 44.5% in Tecoluca to only 37.9% in FMLN control zones and only 12.4% in FMLN expansion zone communities. Only slightly more than a third of FMLN control zone residents assert that development and equity should be linked. Men are more supportive of equitable development than women in FMLN zones, while women are more interested than men in equality in GOES zones.

This result suggests an even further weakening of support for equity as a principle of development in general, regardless of political experiences. The post-war period has relaxed these commitments, particularly in San Ildefonso and insurgent expansion zones, as collective commitments have withered and individualist strategies have returned.

The distribution of capital stock summarized in Table I.1 reveals a mixed picture. Among the three case studies, the distribution is relatively even. The Jiboa Valley holds a slight advantage in terms of human and economic capital, while Tecoluca and San Ildefonso hold a

similar advantage in political and social capital. This same pattern holds when respondents are reorganized according to political experience. Government controlled counter-insurgent communities hold advantages in economic and human capital, while insurgent FMLN controlled communities have an edge in terms of social and political capital. The expansion communities approximate the capital stock of their respective peer communities in control zones.

2. Mediating Attitudes⁹⁹⁴

Empowerment achievements at both the individual level or aggregated at the level of the community are mediated by certain attitudinal underpinnings. These include of self-confidence, trust, life satisfaction, economic optimism, aspirations for development achievement, political efficacy, the level of radical preferences for social change, religious fatalism, and confidence in political institutions. Table I.2 summarizes how these attitudes vary between insurgent and counter-insurgent municipalities. I define mediating attitudes as follows:

Interpersonal Trust: The interpersonal trust index is well-known variable often used as a surrogate for social capital (Inglehart 1990; Wrightsman 1991; Putnam 1993; Rose, et al (1997). It is based on the sum of responses to three classic questions (are people here generally trustworthy; do most people look out for themselves or try to help their neighbors; do you think most people would take advantage of you if they had the chance). The overall mean score to the three questions was converted to a [0-10] scale, where a higher value indicates greater interpersonal trust.⁹⁹⁵ All of the case study municipalities registered levels of trust below the survey mean of 5.7, with no statistical difference between them. Difference in trust between insurgent and counter-insurgent communities is also non-significant.

⁹⁹⁴ Again, scale variables are constructed where appropriate for attitudinal variables. Varimax rotated component factor analysis revealed distinct and theoretically consistent dimensions for the variables system support, tolerance, inter-personal trust, political efficacy, and life satisfaction. The additional dimensions were suggested from individual efficacy questions.

⁹⁹⁵ Reliability for the index is 0.70 (Alpha score).

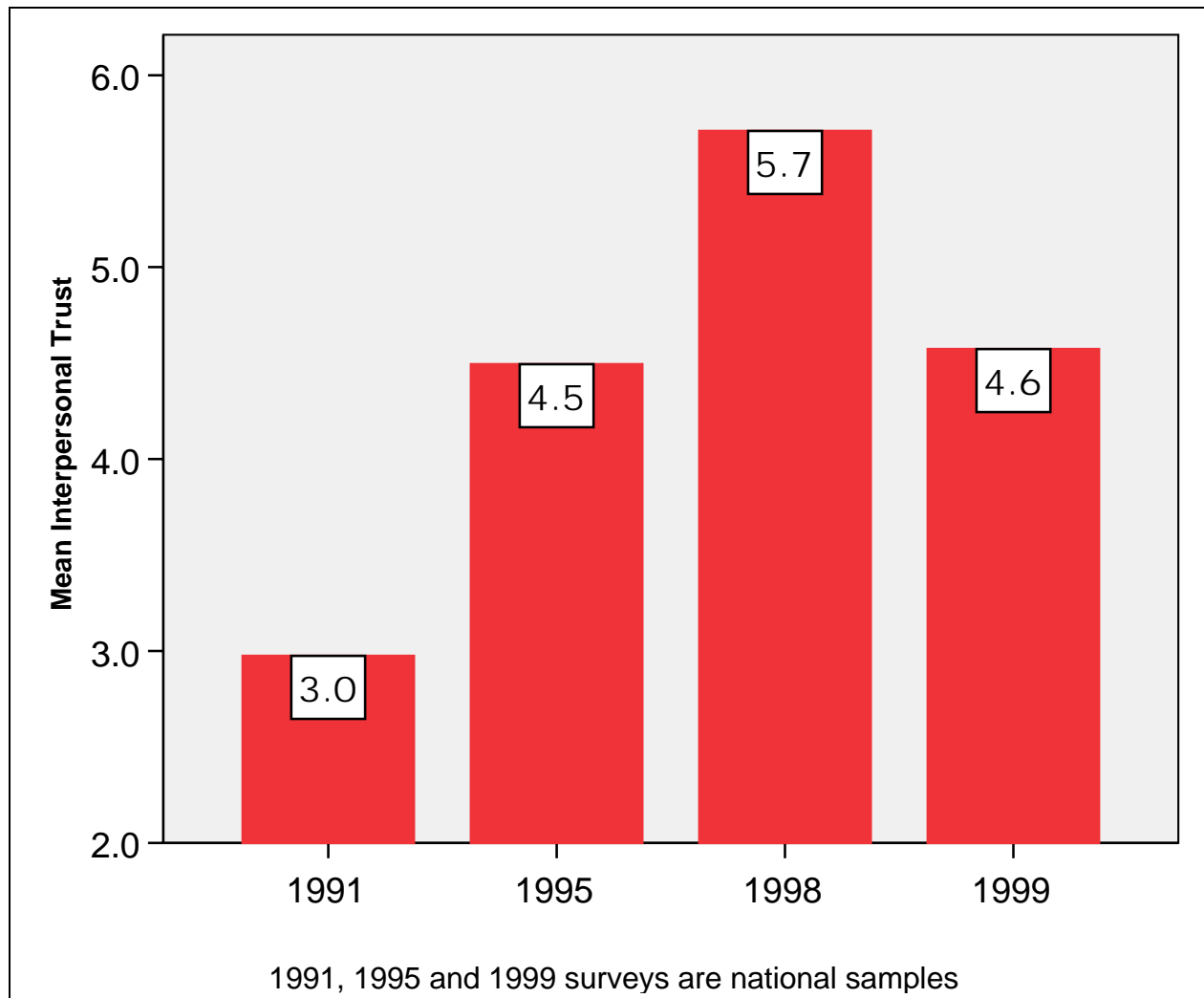


Figure 10.2 Inter-Personal Trust in El Salvador, 1991-1999

Perhaps a more important question is whether this reported level of trust is high or low. Figure 10.2 presents comparisons to recent national surveys in El Salvador, and trust in the paracentral region in 1998 exceeds all other estimates.⁹⁹⁶ LatinoBarómetro studies have underscored the low levels of inter-personal trust throughout Latin America as one explanation for the collapse in democratic indicators, and thus an obstacle to many aspects of

⁹⁹⁶ This gap in trust, an attribute that is slow to change, may at first raise suspicions about the comparability of the data. It is worth noting that the difference is due in part to the higher rural percentage of households in the 1998 paracentral sample where trust tends to be higher. The 1991 sample is largely an urban sample.

development.⁹⁹⁷ For Putnam (1993) as well, traditions of civic activity and well-performing democratic institutions should be associated with high levels of trust, the glue of social capital. However, tests of the trust-democracy causal claims for the developing world conducted by Inglehart (1988, 1990) have yielded little empirical validation (Muller and Seligson, 1994). Efforts to test for the effect of trust on democratic development have neither produced any conclusive confirmation of Putnam's claims (Dasgupta and Serageldin, 2000).

Given the trauma and transformation of family and community caused by the war, there are reasons to expect lower levels of trust in both insurgent and counter-insurgent communities. We could plausibly argue that dramatic changes in an individual's social structure may produce both positive and negative psycho-social effects. The rupture of a solidary peasant culture, coupled with the lost trust of friends and family may represent a net loss to surviving community members if pre-war social networks reinforced an inclusive social contract. The experiences of violence and betrayal on both sides have also undoubtedly eroded trust. Fogaroli and Stowell (1997) have argued that the recomposition of post-war communities in Tecoluca exhibit these concerns. Survey evidence indicated that FMLN influence is associated with greater recomposition. However, it may be just as likely that pre-war networks reinforced patterns of high inequality, the reconstruction of which may not be in the positive interest of the majority.

Life Satisfaction: Reported satisfaction with occupation, family income, house and health care are combined to provide an indication of life satisfaction.⁹⁹⁸ The mean scores, converted to a [0-10] scale, are averaged across municipalities and communities according to their political experience. Differences are not significant.

Optimism (Economic Expectations): People were asked whether they believed that the economic conditions for themselves and their family would be better, worse or the same in the coming year. Despite lower apparent starting points in most economic aspects, the higher levels

⁹⁹⁷ For Latin America as a whole, only 20% reported trust in their neighbor. Those countries with highest reported levels of trust were Mexico (43%), Nicaragua (35%), Colombia (32%) Uruguay (31%) and Costa Rica and El Salvador (30%). *El Diario de Hoy*, April 5, 1998, p. 7. We cannot easily explain the association between trust and system support variables like confidence in institutions, when two very different political systems like El Salvador and Costa Rica report equally low inter-personal trust.

⁹⁹⁸ A bias in the definition of life satisfaction toward certain income, job, house and health care may not represent universal values.

of optimism were found in Tecoluca and insurgent controlled communities. The lowest level of economic optimism was found in the Jiboa Valley and counter-insurgent areas.

Impact of the war: I include two key subjective indicators that reflect a community's collective evaluation of the war's impact. The Salvadoran civil war was extremely violent, disruptive and brought extreme hardship to the lives of millions of families. The war also introduced modest political reforms, redistributed some wealth to the poor and middle classes, and ended the impunity of the security forces. Given this mixed legacy, there can be no universally acceptable evaluation of the war's impact. Supporters of the government tend to delegitimize the FMLN rationale for taking up arms and therefore are more likely to evaluate the civil war in negative terms. Conversely, positive evaluations of the war will most likely be associated with FMLN supporters. However, it is also likely that the majority of respondents may see little change at all. Moreover, many others remain fearful of making public judgments about the war.

Two open-ended questions were asked in the survey to measure the respondents' qualitative evaluation of the global costs and benefits of the civil war and an evaluation of the specific changes in community life as a consequence of the war. The first open-ended question asked respondents how they perceived life in their community to be different (better/worse) that it had been before the war. Answers were coded on a five point scale, with 0 signifying a response consistent with "much worse than before" and a score of 5 signifying a score consistent with "much better than before".

The second open-ended question asked respondents to name what, if anything, the war achieved. Answers were coded on a five-point scale ranging from 0 for answers characterizing only costs to a 5 for those answers strongly emphasizing the benefits. A middle score of 3 was assigned to those who identified peace as the only achievement. I expect FMLN supporters and combatants to emphasize benefits, while ARENA and GOES supporters to emphasize costs. The answers were coded with low scores signifying negative evaluations and high score signifying positive evaluations.

Development Aspirations: People were asked to answer an open ended question, "What improvements in your life would you like to achieve in the future? The answers were coded on a scale of 1-5, based on the reported level of ambition (preserve subsistence, general economic progress, or specific economic targets) and the extent to which the goals would benefit an

individual, the family or the community more broadly. High ranked answers identified collective goals (public goods) that extended beyond basic needs to the acquisition of various capital resources noted in Table I.1. The highest development aspirations are reported in Tecoluca and FMLN communities in general. Lower aspirations are found in the Jiboa Valley and in government controlled zones in general.

Religious Fatalism – Passivity in the face of structural obstacles to development is one consequence of the conservative hierarchical Catholic Church that prevailed in El Salvador before Vatican II, and persists in many parts of post-war society. To measure the extent of religious fatalism, people were asked to report their level of agreement or disagreement with the following proposition, “Some say that if we are closer to God, the problems of this country will get resolved by themselves.” The mean level of opposition (scale 1-4) is 2.2 for the survey sample, which suggests some agreement with the suggestion that individual spiritual devotion *alone* will resolve pressing national problems. Tecoluca is alone among the three municipal case studies in moderate opposition to this perspective. An indication of the lasting impression of the conservative church in places like the Jiboa Valley is the relatively high level of support for the fatalist view in government control zones.⁹⁹⁹

Political Efficacy – Efficacy is probably the attitudinal concept most closely associated with empowerment. I am interested here in internal efficacy, or what Converse defined as, “an individual’s sense of his [sic] own fundamental capacities and experience in operating in the political domain” (1972:334). Numerous studies have illustrated how internal political efficacy is positively correlated with conventional political participation (Campbell, Gurin and Miller 1954; Finifter 1970). Gamson (1968) has argued, and considerable research has confirmed, that low confidence in the institutions of the political system (system support) and high efficacy are the psychological tinder of political protest.¹⁰⁰⁰ Indeed, Muller (1977) argues that in the absence of personal efficacy indicators, system support does not predict much about political behavior.

⁹⁹⁹ Differences between men (mean of 3.0) and women (2.7) in Tecoluca are significant, as well as in FMLN control zones (2.85 vs. 2.5). The strongest indication of religious fatalism is found among women in government expansion zone communities (1.95).

¹⁰⁰⁰ For studies of the efficacy-system support correlate of participatory modes, see Paige (1971), Balch (1974), Seligson (1980) and Bandura (1995)

Still, either as a positive concept (self-governing) or a negative one (powerlessness), there is little agreement over the optimal construct to measure efficacy.

Efficacy must therefore be treated as a multi-dimensional concept, with separate and unique components. Muller has suggested three dimensions: “1) a general belief that government is responsive to citizen influence; 2) skills necessary for effective political behavior; and 3) a psychological disposition or feeling of confidence in one’s personal ability to influence salient government decisions” (Muller, 1970:793). As a central explanatory factor to my argument, I explore the measurement of efficacy using three similarly structured conceptual indicators. A second debate between participatory democracy advocates like Pateman (1970) who argue that participation fosters a sense of efficacy, and adversarial democracy proponents like Verba who reverse the temporal order, will be addressed more directly in the next section.

Subjective Competence: A person’s sense of self-confidence is the perception of being able to influence political processes and outcomes. Respondents were asked, “Would you say that persons such as yourself have much, some influence or no influence over the decisions that are made by groups in this community? This question taps a generalized sense of confidence, least precise in terms of a specific context, but consistent with a bedrock attitudinal indicator used widely since Almond and Verba’s classic 1963 study (Almond and Verba, 1963). Greater perceived influence in local group decisions represents a traditional indicator of internal efficacy. Original responses ranging from 1-3 were converted to a 0-10 scale. Insurgent responses in Tecoluca and FMLN control communities were well above the survey mean of 3.95 and highest in general. Jiboa Valley and counter-insurgent attitudes suggested the lowest levels of subjective confidence.

The gap between Tecoluca and Jiboa Valley communities is substantial and statistically significant ($p < .001$ for political efficacy, and $p < .01$ for subjective competence). There is no overall statistically significant difference between men’s and women’s political efficacy or subjective competence, although women report higher levels of political efficacy than men in the Jiboa Valley and in the GOES expansion zone.¹⁰⁰¹

Political Efficacy-does voting matter?: In the survey, four common questions asked people to value the importance of their vote by evaluating reasons that other people give for not

¹⁰⁰¹ However, we must remember that women living in FMLN expansion zones reported the highest level of abstention (54%).

voting. The stronger the rejection of any of the four rationales for abstention suggests a higher level of political efficacy. Political efficacy fits Muller's psychological disposition of confidence dimension of efficacy. The scores were summed and converted to a scale of [0-10] ($\alpha = 0.76$). The survey mean for political efficacy is 5.4 and the mean for women is 5.2. The results offer additional indications that empowerment is influenced by past political experience with insurgents placing a higher premium on the value of their vote.

Institutional Trust:¹⁰⁰² General trust in political institutions approximates Muller's third measure of efficacy, but has also been defined as a form of political or social capital.¹⁰⁰³ Low institutional trust signals a danger zone within a democratizing political culture. High trust in government institutions has been argued to factor heavily in the stability of a political system and therefore a pre-requisite for economic development (Lipset 1961, 1994, Easton 1975, Miller 1974, Muller, Jukam and Seligson 1982, and Seligson and Booth 1993). However, we know little about the relationship between institutional trust and political participation or the other dimensions of empowerment. Critics of the government may be more motivated to participate than satisfied citizens, yet might also face greater obstacles to participating such as voting rights restrictions, agenda setting at local meetings or coercion. We should therefore expect that low confidence in government can mobilize participation, but unconventional modes may only be possible as a condition of other attitudes, such as efficacy.¹⁰⁰⁴

Institutional trust was defined as the reported confidence (none, a little, some, much) vested in eight key institutions (parties, police, central government, local government, the armed forces, electoral magistrate, legislative assembly and the human rights ombudsman). The sum of the means of the responses to each question converted the total to a scale ranging from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 10.¹⁰⁰⁵ Confidence in the principal institutions of El Salvador is low in absolute terms (high trust is defined at or above a summed score of 5.0). The entire survey

¹⁰⁰² Seligson has referred to this measure as system support, although the survey questions used to measure the concept have changed in more recent analyses. Comparisons are made here to the original variable definition, however to avoid confusion, I refer to the concept as institutional trust.

¹⁰⁰³ See Rossing, Feldman and Assaf (1999) for reference to diffuse trust in government as a social capital resource.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Trusting and critical citizens alike may or may not participate depending in part on individual attributes that contribute to apathy or conformity. I deal with Gamson's efficacy-cynicism thesis below.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Cronbach Alpha score of .83 suggests adequate scale reliability.

produced a mean of 4.5. This regional level of confidence in national institutions is significantly lower than that found by Seligson in recent national surveys. For 1991, the mean for institutional trust was estimated at 5.0. For 1995, the mean had risen to 5.3, and by 1999 to 5.4.¹⁰⁰⁶ San Ildefonso reported the highest support for government (4.8) and Jiboa Valley the lowest (4.0). Controlling for political experience, distrust of most state institutions is greatest among communities in zones previously controlled by the FMLN (3.9), which may not be surprising due to the historic exclusion of the FMLN from the political system. System support is slightly higher and about even in all other surveyed communities (4.6-4.7).

A lack of faith in the primary political institutions may not seem surprising among FMLN communities, given the institutionalized persecution of leftist insurgents and their supporters during almost two decades of war and their current position as an opposition party and lesser relative influence at the national level. On the other hand, we would expect institutional trust to be relatively higher in communities associated with the government and allegedly immune to the influence of the revolutionary ideology. However, the institutions of the current political system are also distrusted by the hard-line right in the Jiboa Valley for contemporaneous rationales - i.e. “selling out” to the FMLN by restricting the property and civil rights of the landed elite with the signing of the Peace Accords.

Seligson and Booth argue that former dissidents tend to be less confident in political institutions as a function of their political exclusion. In their comparative study of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the authors conclude that institutional trust (which the authors label system support) taps strategically manipulated attitudes, that underpin a political culture that is “contingent, utilitarian, and malleable” (1993:790). If the authors are correct, then such political attitudes will be poor independent predictors of participation.

Preferences for Social Change: A related question was designed by Inglehart to measure the extent of political moderation associated with democratic consolidation. It asked respondents to what extent they supported radical change by revolutionary means, gradual improvements through reforms, or valiant defense against revolutionary movements, as the preferable description of how society should be changed. The results represent the percent of

¹⁰⁰⁶ My scale construction differs slightly with those of Seligson and Córdova (1995: 43-55). I take the mean of values of at least four of eight system support questions. I take the mean instead of summing the raw scores in order to avoid eliminating up to one third of the cases per year due to missing values. I also set the cutoff points toward the lowest segment, thus slightly biasing low system support.

respondents that chose “radical revolutionary means”. Support for radical revolutionary means for social change, which according to Inglehart, constitutes a regression from democracy, still finds support among 24% of Tecolucans, but almost no support in the other two municipal case studies and less than 7% of all respondents). Nearly one in five residents of the Jiboa Valley reports a reactionary position that social change should defend against revolution.

Support for revolutionary change is almost exclusively an attitude of FMLN control zone communities, barely registering even in the communities in FMLN expansion areas. Gender differences in support for revolutionary change show that FMLN men are more radical than women. Inglehart argues that democratizing societies should demonstrate a consensus around gradual reforms as the optimal strategy for social change, but Tecoluca confounds this argument with its combination of highly democratic and highly conflictive attitudes.

The attitudes that are most closely associated with empowerment reveal significant differences between the municipal case studies, which tend to become clearer when communities are compared on the basis of their political experience. Of the eleven attitudinal indicators, the evidence suggests that Tecoluca manifests higher levels of confidence, political and personal efficacy, optimism and development aspirations, combined with lower satisfaction with actual economic circumstances, higher distrust of government institutions, a premium placed on the achievements of the war and a stronger preference for radical social change. In the Jiboa Valley, we find almost the polar opposite views - the lowest aspirations, efficacy, and optimism, but also the lowest confidence in government. Preferences of social change tend to be much more conservative, even reactionary, and coincide with higher levels of spiritual fatalism. In San Ildefonso, we find contrasting attitudes. The highest levels of system support, fatalism, economic pessimism and conservative preferences for social change contrast with relatively high political efficacy and development aspirations.

When we control for political experience, FMLN control zones stand out even more. The communities most associated with insurgent political experiences report more empowered attitudes in eight of nine indicators (in which differences are statistically significant). Conversely, those communities most associated with hard-line counter-insurgent political experiences suggest the least empowered attitudes.

3. Achievements

Empowerment reproduces capital resources by converting them into achievements. Four broad dimensions of empowerment achievements include fulfillment of basic needs, social or political action, resource mobilization and local problem solving-advocacy skills. Access to minimum health, clean water, shelter and electricity are all considered basic for survival. I add to these social and political actions, which combine actual voice in social or political decisions, the evidence of participation in community life and local politics, and the level of actual voting or protest participation within the municipality. Local problem solving and advocacy skills will compare the attitudes of capacity with reported preferences and actual attempts to solve identified local problems, with attention to the level of coordination, contentious versus accommodative orientations, and the encompassing or hierarchy features of an advocacy coalition (horizontal and vertical ties). Finally, resource mobilization at the household level will include income improvements, productivity and diversification (particularly for agriculture producers) land use, land security and access to credit.

The indicators for empowerment achievements reflect survey averages as specified for 1998. The sample for specific questions varies, sometimes limiting the question to the subsample of landowners or renters (n=435), women (n= 444) or those engaging local officials. Many of these indicators have changed since 1998. However, the trends that these indicators suggest should provide a reasonable prediction regarding the current achievements (2005), especially considering the devastating impact of recent floods and earthquakes.

a. Meeting Basic Needs:

The first dimension of empowerment achievements involves meeting basic needs. Table 10.6 lists the results for nine indicators of this type achievement.

Access to Basic Services: In terms of access to water, electricity, housing and health care, Jiboa Valley and Tecoluca are closely paired in three of the four services. The Jiboa Valley has a higher percentage of people with access to electricity, roughly twice the number reported in

San Ildefonso or Tecoluca. We find one of the widest observed gaps between insurgent and counter-insurgent communities in terms of access to electricity, with a three to fourfold difference.

Tecoluca, which benefits from a level surface area, has achieved the highest level of private access to water, which refers to the percent of households reporting a private well or piped in source.¹⁰⁰⁷ San Ildefonso exhibits the most severe deficit, although these conditions most likely prevailed before the war. San Fonchanos comment ironically that they lack sufficient drinking water and struggle without electricity in most homes, despite the fact that municipal lands were donated toward the construction of the hydroelectric dam with a 50 square kilometer reservoir. Both FMLN and government controlled communities enjoy significantly higher access to water than expansion zone communities.

Three types of houses are found in rural communities: concrete block, adobe brick and *bahareque* style houses (a combination of plant fiber and mud). The latter is typically associated with extreme poverty. Despite widespread preferences for adobe brick for its heat resistance qualities, adobe dwelling have proven least resistant to recurrent flooding and seismic activity.¹⁰⁰⁸ Thus, only first type of house is considered permanent. Yet only just over a third of the houses surveyed were constructed from concrete block and 15% were living in *bahareque* houses. Despite the massive loss of infrastructure due to the war in Tecoluca, the municipality has achieved the highest level of permanent housing. This is most likely due to the 2,000 new concrete block houses built since 1992 in projects associated with the Peace Accords. In San Ildefonso, only 10% occupied permanent housing and over a third of those surveyed were living *bahareque* style houses. A similar housing advantage is held by FMLN control zone communities.

¹⁰⁰⁷ The percentages in Table I.3 do not reflect access to potable drinking water nor do they address the irregularity of service. Water from wells often disappears in the dry months and wells are frequently ruined by floods, but have the distinct advantage of providing relatively cost-free water. Piped systems are slightly more reliable in the dry months, although outages are frequent and these systems carry the added burden of a monthly charge. Water quality is poor, often non-potable in both cases. Wells and piped systems are comparable, thus grouped as a single category.

¹⁰⁰⁸ While adobe block houses possess certain thermal and cost advantages, the clay-straw construction material has proven inadequate for long term needs, collapse under flooding or tremors (both relatively frequent in the zone), and contribute to respiratory problems by producing higher internal airborne particulate densities. Despite local preferences and the low cost of adobe, I do not consider such housing permanent.

Access to health care is measured by the percentage of respondents that reported that they were very satisfied with the most recent medical assistance. Only two in four reported access to fully satisfactory health care, with no clear trend among municipal cases or otherwise. The Jiboa Valley reported a lower proportion of beneficiaries of recent local development projects, although at least 60% have reported benefiting from at least one. Project activity is highest in Tecoluca and San Ildefonso, perhaps a reflection of higher levels of reconstruction among ex-combatant communities.¹⁰⁰⁹

Four of the five indicators of basic needs achievements reveal significant advances by FMLN communities, particularly Tecoluca. This suggests that gap reflected by economic and human capital may be closing.

b. Social and Political Action

The second dimension of empowerment achievements involves social and political action. Table I.3 lists the results for thirteen indicators of this type achievement.

Voice in Local Decision Making: Social or political action is measured here first by the perceived range of participation in community decision-making that involves local institutional leaders (mayors, councilpersons, agricultural extensionists, loan officers, public works designers, local businesspeople) and community members. Each respondent was asked in an open-ended question format, to describe the decision making process in their respective communities. The question was worded, “who makes the most important decisions in the community?” Answers were coded on a scale from 1–7. The seven-point scale was converted to a 0-10 point range, for which the survey mean was 5.8, and the mean for women was 5.7. Low scores indicated no knowledge of the process or a response indicating that decisions were made exclusively by unelected, or unaccountable leaders. Intermediate scores indicated that decisions were made with formal, albeit limited representation of the community at large. High scores indicated a

¹⁰⁰⁹ Self-reporting as a beneficiary of a project is also a subjective ascription as projects were underway in nearly every community surveyed and it depended on the evaluation of the respondent as to whether they felt they would eventually realize a benefit or had participated in some way.

perception that most of the community participated directly in local decisions, in active coordination with local authorities. The question measures a respondent's political knowledge (who makes decisions and how).

Tecoluca reported the most decentralized local decision making with a mean of 6.9, while the Jiboa Valley reported the least decentralized participation in local decisions with a mean of 5.0. San Ildefonso reported a mean of 6.1. Decentralization is highest in FMLN control zones, while government control zones represent the other extreme with a mean score of 5.2. The gap between insurgent and counter-insurgent communities is nearly 2.5 points. These gaps strongly underscore the relative dispersion of power in the former and concentration in the latter.

The results suggest a variation in local decision making power exercised by non-elites that is consistent with the competing empowerment strategies. What varied in the answers was the extent to which decisions were taken by individuals (e.g. the mayor only) to expanding representation (the mayor, town council and some non-elected local authorities) to approximations of direct participation of affected people ("we all participate in the most important decisions"). The answers varied from a low of "no one, everyone for themselves" to a maximum level of participation ("everyone, with some independence of the municipal government").

One could argue that a person might be satisfied with a non-participatory decision making process. Is a low score evidence of powerlessness? The survey posed a follow-up question (also open-ended) that asked the same respondent to evaluate the process just described. The question was worded, "Are you satisfied with this decision making process, explain why?" Government control communities (and the Jiboa Valley) report the lowest satisfaction with how decisions are made, but FMLN communities (and Tecoluca) report only slightly higher satisfaction. A higher response to the lead question (indicating more decentralized participatory decision making) is moderately and positively correlated ($r = 0.32$, $\text{sig.} < .001$) with positive evaluations of the process described. This result suggests that more participation is generally desirable, but there is also considerable satisfaction with non-participatory processes as well as dissatisfaction despite the relatively greater levels of local involvement.

Effective demand making: Access to local officials represents political capital, but converting access into results is a different matter. As noted in the previous chapter, the

fulfillment of requests made to local and national authorities varied significantly between institutions and slightly between municipalities. Over 80% of those who made requests also reported getting what they requested from NGOs, with little variation between municipal or political categories. This compares to only 40% of requests to municipal governments and 60% of requests to national government agencies. Jiboa Valley requests to mayors of councilpersons were met 53% of the time, compared to only 28% in San Ildefonso and 47% in Tecoluca. Tecoluca requests to government agencies were met over 60% of the time, compared to 50% in the Jiboa Valley and 43% in San Ildefonso. Counter-insurgent communities report greater effectiveness in achieving requests at the municipal and national government levels, while insurgent communities have had more effectiveness with NGOs.

i. Modes of Efficacious Participation

The survey measured several modes of conventional participation and one indicator of unconventional participation (protest). Where possible, questions that were designed to measure the same underlying concept are clustered together in additive scales.¹⁰¹⁰

Formal Group Activism Local development groups which are commonly found in rural El Salvador include church groups, parent-teachers associations, community development groups, cooperatives, and other organizations - a catch-all category that includes some women's organizations, environmental clubs, cultural and sports groups, political organizations, veterans associations, alcoholics anonymous, etc. The formal group activism index variable sums the intensity of participation scores (frequently, sometimes, almost never and never) for these five types of local groups. (alpha = 0.32). Unions were omitted from the scale due to very low

¹⁰¹⁰ A varimax rotated component factor analysis tested the reliability of all but the single question indicators for participation (voting, local government activism, and protest activism). Factor analysis revealed two distinct dimensions consistent with the theorized construction of informal group activism and project participation. However, two distinct dimensions of formal group activism were revealed where one was suspected. The frequency of religious and parent-teachers organization meeting participation is weakly inter-related with other forms of local organizational participation. A division of the five items may be justified on the logic that the former two items (participation in a cooperative or other workplace or community organizations) are associated with traditional civic participation, while the latter items are more associated with workplace – economic development participation. The combined scale for formal group activism is preserved for descriptive cross-sectional comparison, but is split according to suggested dimensions to analyze its specific components in the regression analysis that follows.

participation rates in rural areas. The scale, like those that follow, was converted to range from a low of 0 to a high of 10. The overall survey mean for formal group activism is 3.7, and for women, 3.6.

Informal Communal Activism The second participation index variable sums the scores of three questions about participation in local problem solving. Respondents were asked if they had worked to try to resolve some community problem, if they had provided voluntary labor in its resolution, and if they had tried to organize some new group to resolve a local problem. Yes or no responses were summed and converted to a 0-10 scale ($\alpha = 0.78$). The overall survey mean for informal communal activism is 3.6, and the informal group activism mean for women is 2.8.

Project participation index: The third index variable, project participation, sums the binomial score (1 - participated, 0 - did not participate) for eight distinct dimensions of a development project for which that person identified themselves as a beneficiary ($\alpha = 0.80$). The project phases included, 1) project design or pre-evaluation, 2) select project supervisor or contractor, 3) in the direction of the implementing institution, 4) provided labor, 5) donated materials, 6) reviewed the budget, 7) evaluated the project, 8) some other project related activity. The scale was converted to range [0-10]. The overall survey mean for project participation is 3.1, and the project participation mean for women is 2.9.

The means for formal group activism, informal communal activism and project participation, for both the municipal case studies and between political zones, are shown in Figures 10.3 and 10.4 (see also Table I.3).

Tecoluca reports the highest level of participation for all three indicators. Jiboa Valley communities appear to be consistently and dramatically less active. Insurgent Tecoluca demonstrates higher levels of participation on average than government influenced communities. These differences are statistically significant ($p < .001$) for formal group activism and ($p < .05$) for informal group activism and for project participation

Controlling for political experience within the entire survey (Figure 10.4), produces a pattern of consistent and declining levels of participation with movement from insurgent to counter-insurgent communities. FMLN control zones report the highest levels of participation for all three indicators. FMLN and GOES expansion zones report similar participation levels. Differences between zones are significant with least chance of statistical error for formal group

activism ($p < .001$). GOES zones again rank as the least active for each mode of participation. If participation is important as a cause or effect in the process of empowerment, FMLN influence tends to be associated with higher participation at the local level. It is worth remembering that no Jiboa respondents are classified as living in communities previously under the political experience of FMLN influence, while 40% of San Ildefonso respondents are classified as FMLN control or expansion zone communities. The higher than average level of participation in San Ildefonso may be due to the FMLN communities within the municipality.

The gender gap between men and women's levels of participation is highest for informal group activism (as high as 50% for San Ildefonso). For project participation, the gender gap narrowed, even reversed in several cases (San Ildefonso and FMLN expansion zone communities). However, FMLN women's participation levels, while lower than their male peers, are still higher than men's participation in GOES zones. Although this inequality in terms of participation has been preserved within FMLN communities, FMLN women are more active at the local level than both men and women living in zones outside of FMLN influence.¹⁰¹¹

Overall levels of participation may appear low in general. For formal group activism, having reported participating frequently in one group would have logged a score of 2, participating frequently in two groups produces a score of 4. Frequent participation in more than two groups becomes difficult for employed adults, so the mean of 3.7 for formal group activism for the entire sample, seems a reasonable expected level of activity. For the informal mode of activism, having answered yes to only one of the three questions would have registered a score of 3.33, which is just below the total survey mean of 3.6. The means for formal group activism and informal group activism suggest a relatively active civil society, particularly in FMLN communities.

¹⁰¹¹ Jennings (1998) for persistent gender disparity in participation in similar transitions from hierarchical rural settings.

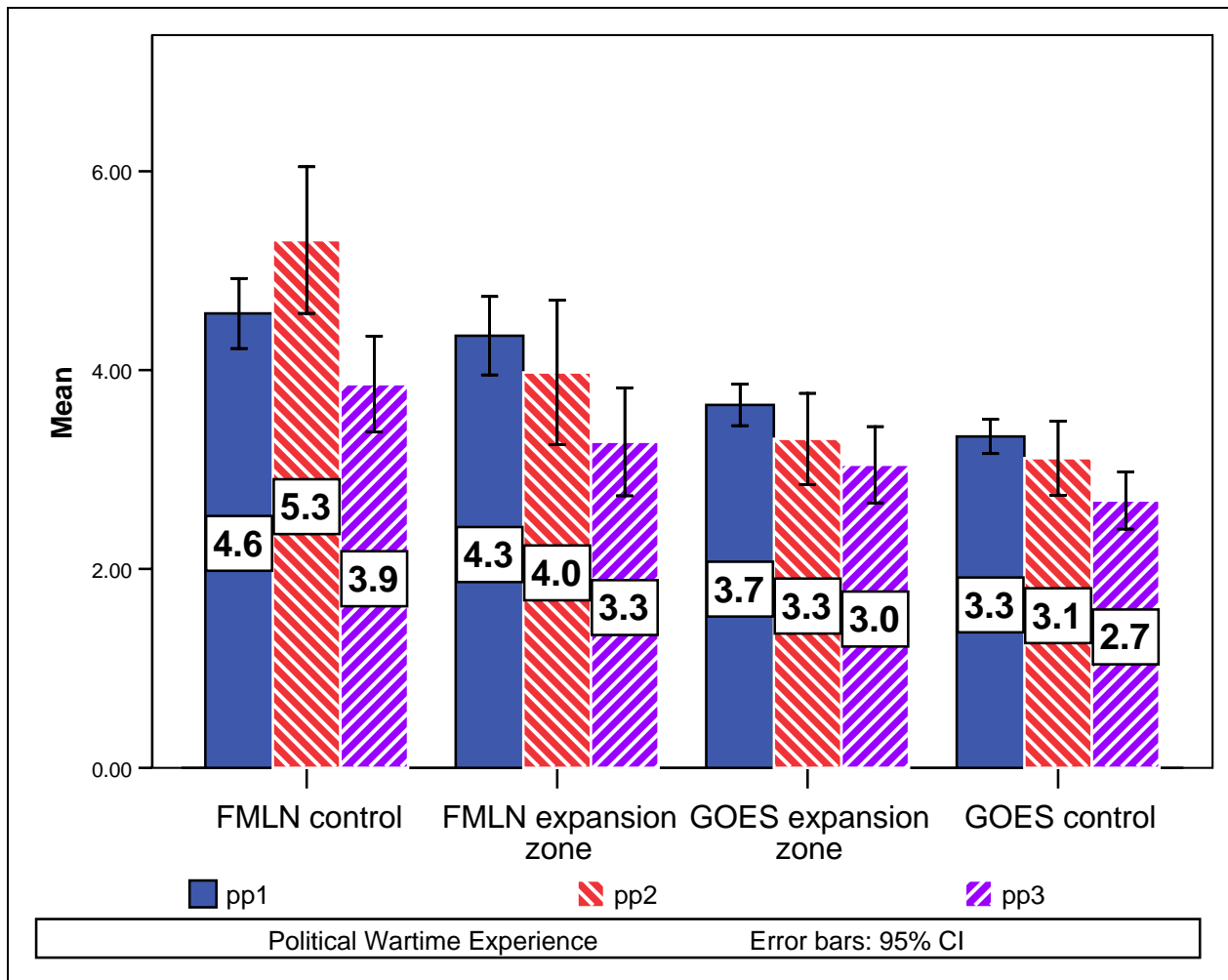


Figure 10.3 Modes of Conventional Participation (by Case Study Municipality)

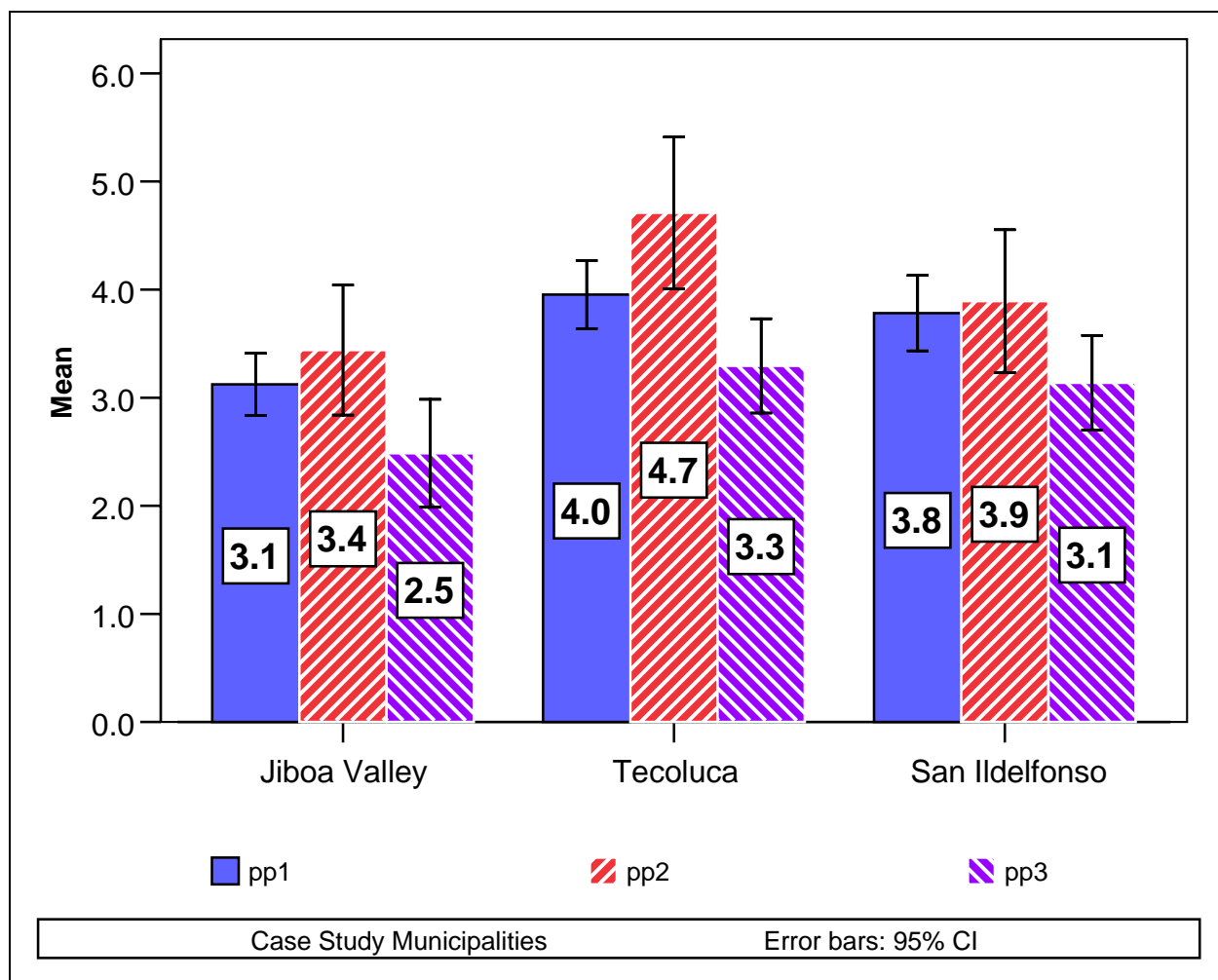


Figure 10.4 Modes of Conventional Participation (by Political Experiences cohort)

Women's organizations: The presence of women's organizations merits specific attention given the association of gender with patterns of disempowerment. Women were asked how frequently they participated in a local women's group and the indicator reflects the percent of respondents that reported frequent or some participation. Close to one in four women in Tecoluca were active in local women's groups, representing literacy circles, economic projects, maternal health or community organizing initiatives. By comparison, only 5-6% of women in the other municipal cases were active. The pattern is even more sharply skewed when compared FMLN and non-FMLN communities. Nearly 40% of all women in FMLN control zones participate in organizations that attend to women's issues, compared to a much lower level elsewhere.

Gender Influence: Women were asked, “Compared to before the war, would you say that women in the community have more influence in the community, less influence, or the same influence as before?” Over half of all respondents reported that women have more influence now, suggesting significant advances in the gender balance of power at the local level. Consistent with the higher level of activity in women’s groups, women in Tecoluca and FMLN control communities report considerably more pronounced perceptions of their own influence compared to other areas.

Cabildo participation, Voting and Protest Participation: Respondents were asked whether they had attended a cabildo abierto within the last six months, whether they had voted or not and for which political party in the 1997 local and legislative elections. Each respondent was also asked whether they had participated in a public protest related to some community problem. Participants were then asked to describe the problem that motivated the protest, the objective and the location of the protest.

Overall, 20% have attended cabildo abiertos, with no statistically significant differences between municipalities of political experiences. Cabildo attendance is almost the same in each municipality, with one in five reporting attendance at such a meeting in the past six months. Cabildo attendance is highest within FMLN control zone communities, and lowest among government expansion zone communities. The most closely associated respondents with the insurgent experience of the FMLN are not only high intensity protesters, but also participate in local municipal politics through conventional channels with the same intensity. Why does cabildo attendance drop in FMLN expansion zones? These FMLN communities more often represent a political minority, located within hostile, exclusionary ARENA governed municipalities.¹⁰¹² Therefore, this mixed evidence of higher local municipal activism in FMLN zones may indicate that local government activism may depend not only on the types of communities but their respective capacity to coordinate with the local party in power. Women’s overall *cabildo* participation is almost half that of men (11.9% vs. 20.4%), and the relative

¹⁰¹² In 1998 ARENA governed in almost two-thirds of El Salvador’s municipalities. FMLN municipal governments also exclude ARENA supporters, however there are substantive differences between the representative styles of both parties.

gender gap is highest in Tecoluca and FMLN zones in general. In FMLN expansion zones, men attend cabildos four times as frequently as women.

In Tecoluca, two of every five respondents reported having recently participated in public protest, compared to 15% in San Ildefonso, and less than 5% in the Jiboa Valley. When the controls for political experience are introduced, the pattern shifts even more sharply toward the association of the FMLN experience with protest activity. Almost two thirds report experience in activities that range from marches, to land, street and office takeovers. Protests involving FMLN supporters have tended to be oriented toward national issues (agrarian debt forgiveness, indemnification under the Peace Accords and land redistribution) as well as local grievances (environmental contamination by local industry, and lack of flood prevention infrastructure). GOES zone protests, on the other hand, focused almost exclusively on local services (water and electricity prices and service quality) as well as infrastructure demands. FMLN protests tend to take place in the capital city of San Salvador, while GOES zone protests were more likely to occur in the municipal or department capital. Finally, explanations of the motivation and goals of the protest elicited a variety of responses that were coded for their grasp of the problem. FMLN respondents demonstrated a more informed political understanding of their participation.

More recent survey data put the level of political participation in the paracentral region and in FMLN communities into broader comparative perspective. Figures 10.5 and 10.6 compare the 1998 survey average with other Latin American reported levels of protest and cabildo abierto participation in 2004. El Salvador as nation ranks last with only 6% participation, while Bolivia and Colombia, two countries in turmoil, reach or surpass the average level of protest activity found in the paracentral region. The comparison underscores a very high level of contentious mobilization in Tecoluca and insurgent communities compared to neighboring countries.

If this were all, we might assume that the paracentral region was also politically unstable. Yet the confounding evidence illustrated in Figure 10.6 shows that contentious and conventional political action go hand in hand within the paracentral region, and particularly among insurgent communities. The regional average level of cabildo participation in 1998 exceeds all other estimated country participation rates, as well as a declining rate in El Salvador as a whole. The higher rate is likely due to the higher rural proportion of paracentral respondents. Seligson

(2000) has shown that small rural towns rely on cabildo type meetings as an outlet for political engagement at a much higher rate than urban areas, which are reflected in the national averages.

As communities associated with the political opposition, higher levels of protest by Tecolucans and FMLN zone respondents may not seem surprising. Higher socio-economic status among Jiboa Valley and GOES respondents presumes higher influence the national level and suggests they may protest less because they are more satisfied. Lower FMLN influence at the national level may explain higher level of nationally focused protest activity. However, the survey data presented above clearly refute this assumption. Recall that over 44% of Jiboa Valley residents and 67% of counter-insurgent community respondents reported a willingness to join a protest against a harmful government sponsored project. This professed interest in contentious collective action is not matched by actions or perhaps local organizing capacity in these communities – suggesting a gap between empowerment resources and agency to convert this capital into empowerment achievements.

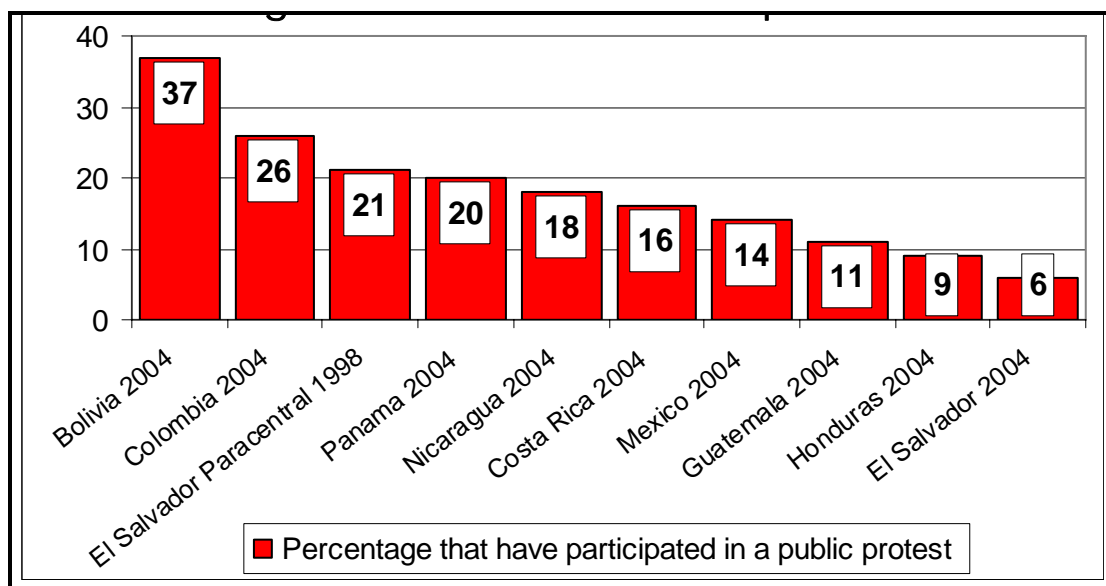


Figure 10.5 Protest Participation in Latin America (Paracentral Region Mean compared to other LAC country means)

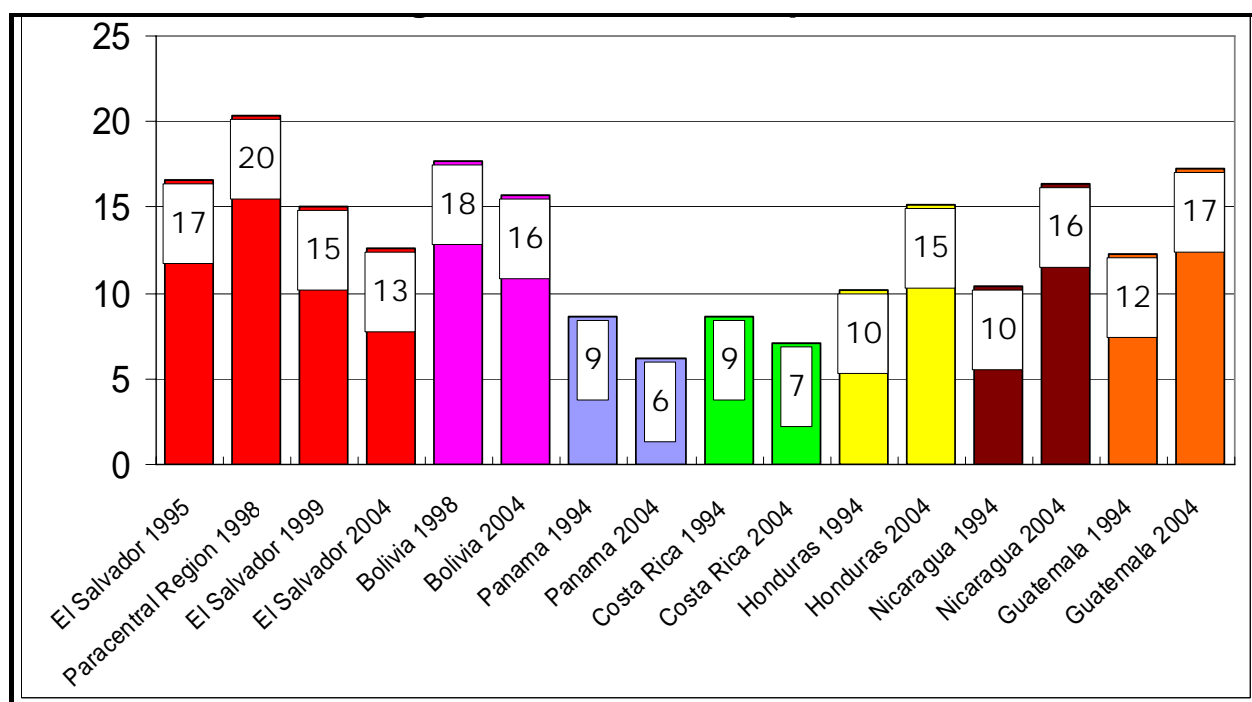


Figure 10.6 Cabildo Participation in Latin America (Paracentral Region Mean compared to other LAC country means)

This agency is an essential complement to decentralized development in highly unequal settings such as rural El Salvador. What seems more remarkable is that the converse assumption - that protesting communities forgo conventional avenues of political expression, is also refuted by this evidence.

Voting data also illustrate interesting differences. El Salvador has now conducted six successive peacetime elections. Greater competition is a new feature of these elections and the FMLN has made impressive advances, especially at the local level. However, high abstention rates remain a dominant and poorly understood aspect of Salvadoran political culture (Barnes, 1998; Córdova, et al, 1998; Córdova, 2001). Figure 10.7 and Figure 10.8 shows the stated voting preferences in the case study municipalities and the political experience clusters for local elections in 1997.¹⁰¹³ Voting abstention was reported at 31% for the entire survey, ranging from a low of 28% in San Ildefonso to a high of 37% in the Jiboa Valley. Actual abstention rates for the 1997 elections were much higher at 62%.¹⁰¹⁴ What explains the over-reporting of voting? One clue is the high percentage of respondents who claimed to have voted, but declined to identify the party, which also ranged from a low of 31% in San Ildefonso to a high of 39% in the Jiboa Valley. Excluding abstention and the guarded “my vote is secret” responses, only 1 in 4 respondents from the Jiboa Valley reported voting for a specific party - with ARENA polling slightly above the FMLN. In Tecoluca, 33% openly reported voting for the FMLN and only 2.6% reported voting for ARENA, while 32.3% of Tecolucans declined to specify the party. Respondents in San Ildefonso reported the highest open support for ARENA, but this support was divided in a three-way contest between the FMLN and the Christian Democrats.

Typically voting is over-reported in surveys in response to the social desirability of recognition for having performed a civic duty (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995:51). In El Salvador, a political culture of fear may also restrict openly stating party preference. We can

¹⁰¹³ At the time of the survey, there had only been one prior Presidential and Legislative election in which the FMLN had participated as a legal political party (1994). The voting results were largely the same.

¹⁰¹⁴ Only Guatemala and Colombia have greater abstention rates than El Salvador. *La Prensa Grafica*, March 14, 1999, p 7c. The magnitude of this problem is tied to low trust in political parties, problems in getting registered, and the absence of decentralized voting stations. The implications go much deeper as elections are the principal institution upon which consensus politics rests its legitimacy in El Salvador. Estimates of actual abstention among registered voters in the 1999 elections for the case studies are 65% in San Ildefonso, and 58% in Tecoluca. No estimates of registered voters in Jiboa Valley were available. However, equal caution should be used to interpret high voting rates with a well performing democracy.

speculate on how to redistribute the “fearful” responses between abstention and specific parties. ARENA and FMLN consistently poll lower than their respective, actual 1997 party vote. Adjusting the reported party votes to percentages of only the reported votes (party preference plus “vote is secret” responses) produces the following gaps in reported vs. actual party voting preferences, ARENA: (16.5% vs. 39% in the Jiboa Valley, 3.8% vs. 26% in Tecoluca, and 18.5% vs. 52% in San Ildefonso) and FMLN: (13.4% vs. 24% in the Jiboa Valley, 48% vs. 64% in Tecoluca, 24% vs. 22% in San Ildefonso). ARENA supporters appear less inclined to reveal party preference than FMLN supporters, with the unusual social desirability or vote fraud outcome in San Ildefonso of more people claiming to vote for the FMLN than seems possible given actual results.

When we compare reported voting preferences across communities regrouped according to political experience, the pattern becomes clearer. Both abstention and “vote is secret” response rates are lowest for FMLN control zones, and declared FMLN preferences are dominant. Reported abstention is highest in FMLN expansion zones, while reluctance to state party preference is highest in government control and expansion zones. Twice the number of government control zone respondents do not feel free to report party preference or admit to abstention in government control zones than in FMLN control zones, combined with a very low reported level of support for ARENA in the zones where their mayors govern locally. The results indicate that the fear of talking openly about politics is highest where government influence has been less contested by the FMLN.

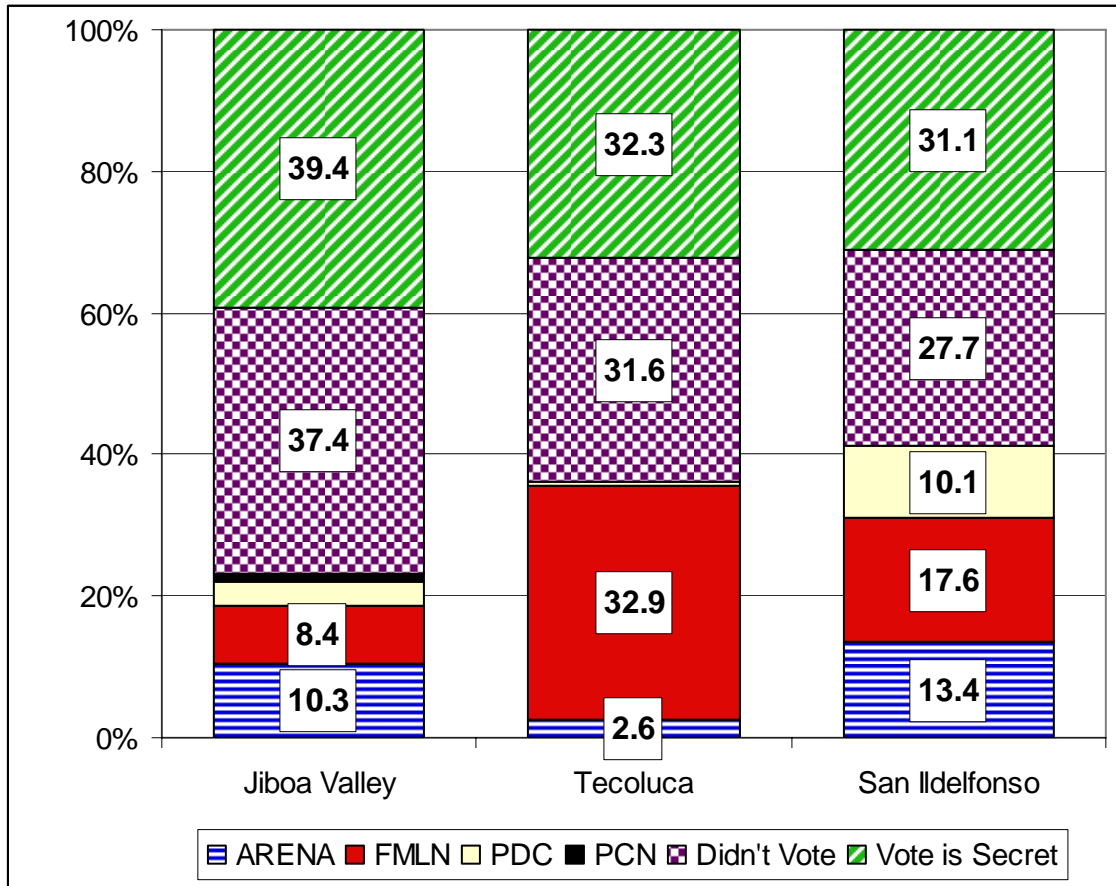


Figure 10.7 Conventional Participation – Voting Preferences in Case Study Municipalities in 1997 Municipal Elections

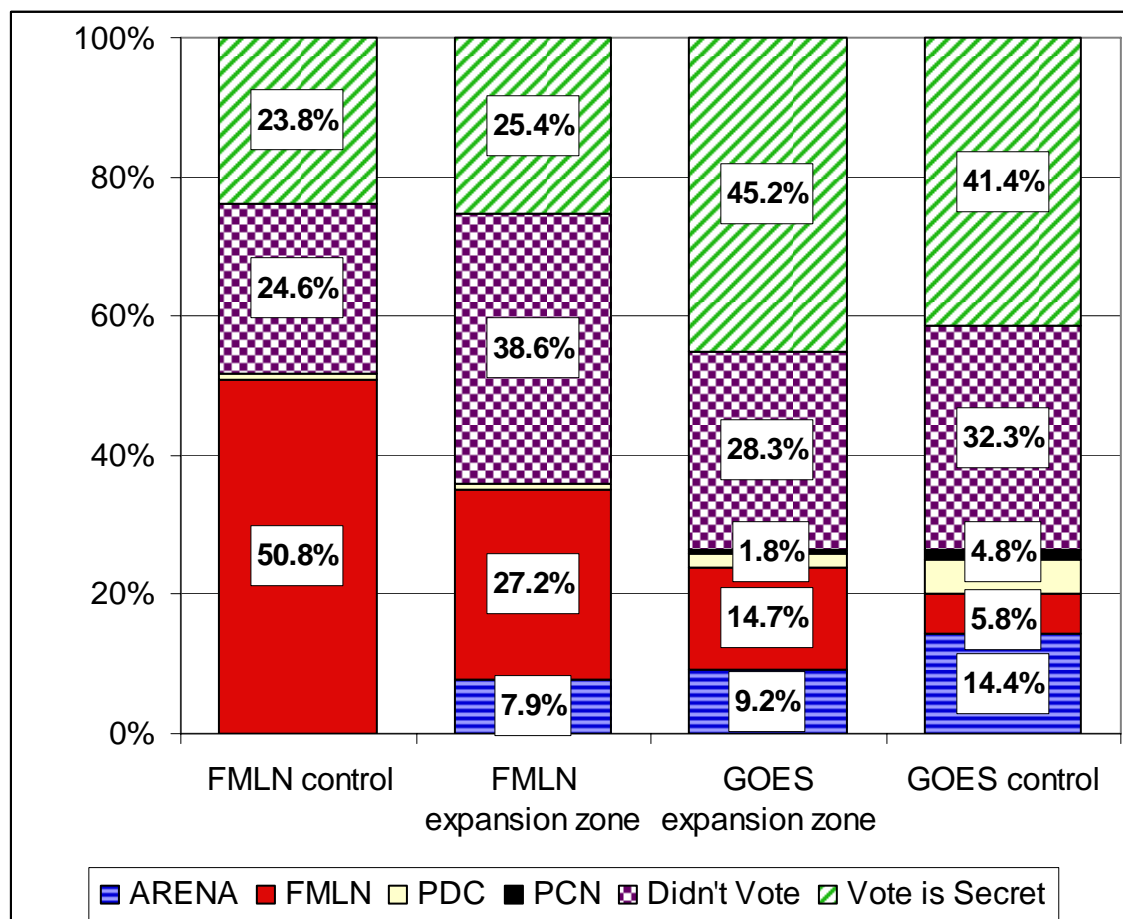


Figure 10.8 Conventional Participation – Voting Preferences by Political Experience in 1997 Municipal Elections

By looking at gender differences in the vote, we may unpack the abstention and fearful responses one step further. Women reported higher overall abstention (39.1%), and the gap between men and women's abstention rates is highest in Tecoluca (a 16 point gap).¹⁰¹⁵ Responses suggest that nearly 50% of the women from Tecoluca and the Jiboa Valley did not vote, while that figure drops to 37.5% for San Ildefonso. Women's abstention in FMLN expansion zones rose to 53%. Conversely, women in FMLN zones, including Tecoluca, reported voting less frequently for the FMLN. Clearly, the FMLN demonstrate the greatest difficulty in recruiting the vote of potential women supporters. On the other hand, the percent of women who

¹⁰¹⁵ Analysis of the 1999 national survey of El Salvador estimated that the gender gap among voters in the 1997 elections favored men by 13 percentage points (64% of men reported voting vs. 51% of women).

declined to reveal their party preference was lower than for all men, and lowest in FMLN zones. Women are less fearful than men in nearly every category. Surprisingly, men in the government control and expansion zones report the highest reluctance to reveal party preference -- two times as high as FMLN women. The relatively high rate (50%) of women in FMLN control zone women that have participated in a protest action contrasts with the gender gap within the reported FMLN vote and raises some questions about the general empowerment of women in FMLN zones, suggesting different thresholds or premiums placed on these modes of participation.

A review of the evidence on political and social action suggests the strong support for the thesis that the achievements of Tecoluca's empowerment through conflict strategy are not idiosyncratic, but rather also reflect achievements in other paracentral communities historically associated with insurgent political experiences. Of the thirteen indicators, in nine Tecoluca reports the achievements that surpass San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley. Equally important, in over half of the indicators, the counter-insurgent case of empowerment by invitation in the Jiboa Valley reports the lowest level of achievement. When reorganized by political experience, the trend is crystal clear. Men and women in communities most closely associated with the FMLN are significantly more involved in the social and political life (for 11 of the 13 indicators), demonstrating the most versatile capacity for collective action in both conventional and unconventional opportunities for participation.

c. Local Problem Solving and Advocacy Skills

Following work by Mathiason and Powell (1972) and Seligson (1980b), the third dimension of empowerment achievement was designed to measure *problem-solving and advocacy skills*. The primary indicator consists of an opened-ended set of questions that first asks a respondent to name the most important local problem, then to explain the history of that problem, if they could do something to help solve that problem, and finally, to describe what that they would do to solve the problem. By having the respondent name the local problem, this set of questions corrects for the possible over-definition of the situation for which many surveys predetermine a closed list of possible responses. At the same time, by emphasizing the reporting of skills that

might be employed or available to the individual to solve the problem, it allows the respondent to choose from the full range of conventional or contentious tactics.

In addition to constructing a Guttman scale from the four questions, I focus on coding the content of the last question – the *proposed solution* to the identified problem. The Guttman scale was constructed by scoring a point for a problem definition, 1-3 points for the level of analysis and specificity on the problem origin, and another point if the problem was perceived to be solvable. Finally I coded the answers to the last question according to a cardinal scale of 0-5, ranked by the extent that their respective solutions reflected an increasing reliance on *collective* and *contentious action*. Lower scores reflected more conformity with the status quo. A score of 0 was assigned to respondents who answered negatively to the prior (entry) question of whether they could help solve the problem. A score of 1 was given to conformist responses (i.e. “whatever is the will of God” or “there is only so much a poor person can do”). A score of 2 was assigned to proposed solutions that were individualist and depended on the assistance of authority (i.e., “I could make a request that the police/mayor/government (i.e. someone other than me) should solve the problem”). A score of 3 was assigned to responses that proposed an individual contribution to a larger process (i.e. attend a town meeting, offer voluntary labor). A score of 4 was assigned to responses that focused on strengthening communal organization to address local authorities about the problem through conventional tactics. A score of 5 was coded when an answer made reference to both community organization *and* the potential use of pressure or protest tactics. The entire problem solving scale ranged from [0-9].

A second measure, *collective advocacy*, reflects the percentage of respondents that answer the final question with solutions that involve collective and possibly contentious strategies (scores of 4 or 5). The inference that contentious tactics are available or may be necessary demonstrates a level of self-confidence and a confidence in the reliability of one’s neighbors. Together, these measures not only tap relevant problem solving efficacy and skills, but also serve as an indicator of challenging participation and orientation.¹⁰¹⁶ Contentious, confident and collective problem solving skills should be a strong predictor of both conventional and unconventional modes of participation. The results indicate that Tecoluca appears the most

¹⁰¹⁶ Low positive zero order correlations between the two attitudinal efficacy indicators and problem solving skills suggest that they are related, but are measuring different sub-components of efficacy. Correlations were 0.12 (political efficacy and subjective competence), 0.17 (political efficacy and problem solving skills), 0.15 (competence and skills).

politically competent in terms of both skills, a sense of confidence, and the capacity for collective action. The indicators for the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso portray a lower level of problem solving skills with significantly lower reliance on organized communal strategies in particular. Political experience and municipal case study differences for both indicators are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

The mean for problem solving skills understates the disposition to use contentious tactics to solve local problems. Overall, 25% of all those surveyed, responded by proposing some form of communal organization, and only 7% proposed contentious, collective tactics. However, reported solutions to community problems in Tecoluca would be more than twice as likely to involve organized pressure as those solutions in San Ildefonso or Jiboa Valley.

Awareness of local problems and confidence in solving them are highest in FMLN control zones, slightly higher than FMLN expansion communities. FMLN communities demonstrate much lower levels of collective advocacy, suggesting important sub-cultural differences between the two. San Ildefonso reports the most conformist problem solving proposals, somewhat inconsistent with other similarities shared with Tecoluca.

Resorting to organized pressure to solve local problems reflects a capacity for conflictive tactics that is much more available to communities in FMLN control zones than anywhere else. One in five FMLN control zone residents mentioned contentious protest tactics as a potential means for solving local problems, compared to 5% in government controlled zones. Within expansion zones, government influence is associated with a higher proclivity for collective protest compared to FMLN expansion influence (both below 5%). This finding may reflect indemnification movements by FAES ex-combatants, ex-civil patrollers, or small farmers demanding debt relief that have participated in recent protest activities - many of which have been organized by FMLN leaders. While it is difficult to confirm, it seems worth speculating that strategic learning may be occurring as dissident, conservative communities adopt FMLN techniques of contentious collective action.

Gender differences are small, with women reporting slightly lower levels of problem solving skills (although the gap is particularly wide in Tecoluca, San Ildefonso, and FMLN zones in general). The gender gap in FMLN zones is magnified through the optic of choosing collective, contentious solutions to problems. Although the relative problem solving skills gap is

highest within FMLN communities, FMLN women still demonstrate less conformist problem solving skills than many men and women in counter-insurgent communities.

d. Agricultural Resource Mobilization

The final dimension of empowerment achievements emphasizes individual level resource mobilization, particularly for small farmers. The seven indicators summarized in Table I.3 reflect short-term changes in the use of economic and other capital resources to convert assets such as land and training into improvements in rural livelihoods. While some of the listed indicators suggest changes over a period of a single year, they nevertheless provide some evidence regarding various mechanisms or proxies for capital reproduction. Since most of the indicators refer to the subsample of agricultural producers (n=467), statistically significant differences between much smaller groups (between 30 and 100), will be much more difficult to achieve.

The first two indicators asked producers if they experienced increases in their agricultural income or production compared to the prior year. Only two of every five producers in the entire survey reported an increase in production between 1997 and 1998. The highest mean agricultural production gains are found in the Jiboa Valley, where over 60% of producers reported increases over 1997. By contrast, agricultural production declined on most farms in San Ildefonso and fewer than a third reported production increases. In Tecoluca, nearly half reported gains, but over a third reported losses. These results likely reflect a drought and strong coffee prices in 1997, which had a disproportionately negative effect outside of the Jiboa Valley. These differences vanish when comparison is made between insurgent and counter-insurgent producers. Although the production performance is weakest in FMLN expansion zones, there is no statistically significant difference between the four categories.

All groupings of producers reported monthly average earnings from agriculture below \$130 – near poverty levels. Unlike production, there were no statistically significant differences in agricultural income suggesting that any production gains were offset by deep income losses by subsistence producers.

Diversification and intensification of production are widely considered to offer the only possibilities for sustainable livelihood improvements in micro-parcel farming. Producers were asked to identify the range of crops cultivated. The answers were ranked on a crop diversification index scaling from 1 for basic grains only to 6 for mix of basic grains, fruits or vegetables, and export crops such as coffee, sugar cane or non-traditional crops (cashews, etc.). Cattle ranchers were not included. Alternatives to basic grains are most likely to be found among Jiboa producers and least likely among San Fonchanos an indication of both land quality and the concentration of best land and productive resources among fewer producers. Similarly, San Ildefonso producers are much more likely to consume the food they produce, indicating a combination of disincentives to sell, such as storage and transport costs. Higher subsistence production is another indicator of low diversification, which was estimated at 2.77 for the Jiboa Valley, 2.22 for Tecoluca, and 1.11 for San Ildefonso.

Access to technical assistance, alternative production techniques (like organic agriculture) and irrigation can also improve production through intensified land use on small farms. Reported access to these three aspects of farm technology were summed into a single index to measure agricultural intensification strategies. The results indicate that although technological resources seem to be relatively unavailable to most producers in general, producers in Tecoluca and FMLN control communities reported a relatively higher level of access. The differences are significant at a p-value of .001.

Slightly more than a third of all producers report access to technical assistance, a reflection of the collapse of state extension programs (CENTA was identified by only 10% of producers). One in two producers in Tecoluca and FMLN control communities, report some type of technical assistance (with nearly half identifying NGOs as the source). The considerable absence of technical assistance for producers in San Ildefonso and all other clusters of producers in expansion and government control zones suggest a concentration of NGO attention among FMLN farmers, excluding many others. Actual experimentation with organic farming techniques are found among a quarter of all producers, with slightly more in FMLN control communities. Knowledge of organic techniques without the capacity to experiment is much higher (over 50%), again with a slight tendency favoring producers in FMLN communities. For irrigation, the flatness and proximity to the Lempa River is an advantage, but has also been a

curse to occupants of the coastal valley. Floods have destroyed crops, homes and livelihoods for thousands living in the lower Lempa valley four times in the last seven years.

Relatively equal land distribution represents the foundation of Tecoluca's local development strategy, but has this increased access to land translated into the ability to produce or security in maintaining this asset. Landowning producers were asked how much of their land was titled and how much of their farmland was actually in production. The results suggest that while owned farm sizes may be smaller in the Jiboa Valley (2.2 ha.), nearly all of it is in production (96%). Landowners farms are larger on average in Tecoluca and San Ildefonso, but size is inversely proportional to the percent actually farmed. In San Ildefonso, only 39% of farms averaging 3.9 hectares are cultivated, the equivalent of 1.5 hectares. In Tecoluca, the equivalent farm in production is only 1.4 hectares. Clearly, access to land is not sufficient to convert this asset into a mechanism for resource mobilization.

This pattern in the relative distribution of net equivalent farms in production is apparent when comparing producers in FMLN and government zones of influence, although the gap is smaller. Between 72% and 74% of counter-insurgent producers farmland is under production – producing an equivalent farm size of 1.8 ha. for expansion and control zone communities, respectively. FMLN producers report on 34% to 65% of land in production – the equivalent farm size of 1.2 and 1.4 ha. for expansion and control zones communities.

Similarly, over 94% of all landowners in the Jiboa Valley reported having title to 50% or more of their land, compared to only 67.5% in San Ildefonso and 54% in Tecoluca. Nine in ten producers in counter-insurgent communities enjoy significant land security compared to only six in ten among insurgent communities. The parcelization of proindiviso PTT properties beginning in 1997 may be most responsible for this gap in land security between insurgent and counter-insurgent landowners, but nevertheless represents a significant factor in local development.

Access to credit is a final indicator of individual level resource mobilization. Credit typically requires a guarantee, which is facilitated by having a title to land. Production is also a criteria for acquiring credit, although credit is necessary to increase, diversify and intensify production. Overall, 28% of all survey respondents reported access to credit, with the highest levels in Tecoluca, FMLN control communities and government expansion communities, although the differences are not statistically significant. For farmers only (a subset of all reported borrowers), the percentages increase, suggesting the greater reliance of agriculture on

credit than other occupations. Over 40% of farmers in Tecoluca reported access to credit, a difference that is statistically significant and over three times the national average for rural areas. Between 24% to 32% of producers grouped according to political experience report access to credit, with a similar trend but differences are not statistically significant.

Resource mobilization achievements reveal a landscape that remains largely unfavorable to small farmers in general, but suggests that FMLN producers are closing the gap with producers in counter-insurgent areas. In agricultural production, farm income and access to credit, there is little difference between FMLN and government ties. Producers in areas of government influence tend to have title to cultivate more of the land they own. Producers in FMLN areas of influence are more diversified and enjoy an advantage in access to agricultural technology. In four of the seven indicators, Jiboa Valley producers report the highest level of achievement – the highest percentage for any of the four dimensions of empowerment achievements.

The bivariate comparisons of participation above offer strong evidence toward confirmation of my initial assumption – that legacies of political experience have left their mark on local political culture. The evidence on empowerment achievement provides persuasive support for the thesis that political experience has shaped individual level outcomes. Of the 27 indicators, Tecoluca scores highest on 17 of them, the Jiboa Valley on 6, and San Ildefonso on 1 (differences on three indicators were not statistically significant). When respondents are regrouped by virtue of the underlying political experience of their respective communities, those associated most closely with FMLN insurgent experiences score highest on 20 of the 27. Those communities most associated with hard-line counter-insurgent political experiences score the highest on only 3, with expansion zone communities achieving high scores on two indicators each (FMLN control and expansion communities tied for high score on one indicator, and for two others differences were not statistically significant).

Where empowerment through conflict strategies have prevailed, we find a more pronounced attitudinal disposition toward empowerment as well as the economic, social and political achievements that come as a result. Where empowerment by invitation strategies have shaped local development processes, we find much lower levels of empowerment achievement, resting upon a more fragile attitudinal foundation. The results suggest that the impact of war on

post-war attitudes and behaviors that are associated with empowerment go beyond Tecoluca or the Jiboa Valley and extend throughout the regional sample of similar communities.

However, the lack of continuity from core to peripheral areas of FMLN influence raise the question of just how extensive insurgent political experience actually is. San Ildefonso and communities associated with weaker ties to the FMLN in expansion zones exhibit a much lower level of empowerment than Tecoluca or communities in FMLN areas of control. For over half of the reported attitudinal and achievement indicators, respondents from San Ildefonso or FMLN expansion zones are more similar to respondents in government expansion than to the core insurgent communities.

Despite claims that an insurgent victory would be the end for any hope for democracy in El Salvador, these results underscore the achievements of the insurgent empowerment through conflict thesis. Combined, they suggest a strong association between insurgent political experiences, superior collective problem solving skills, improved provision for basic needs and resource mobilization, and high levels of participation in protest activities but also in some of the most conventional institutions. Together these achievements suggest empowered individuals. The results offer equally compelling evidence of weak democratic attitudes and achievements in the Jiboa Valley, the municipal case most impermeable to insurgent political experience. The strongest democratic and development indicators are found where empowerment is expected the least, among the revolutionary communities of Tecoluca and the FMLN.

However, we cannot say with certainty whether it was the insurgent or counter-insurgent political experience that explains the performance of an individual or community in post-war achievements? Could it not have also been other individual attributes, such as education or socio-economic advantages, or organizational ties that also explain these results. To answer this question, we must weigh the relative importance of the different possible factors to judge whether political experience holds up.

In this section I compare different forms of participation as the principal measure of empowerment achievement in decentralized local economic development. I then test the strength of political experiences in explaining participation across the entire survey by regressing both modes of participation on the contextual variable - political experience, while controlling for other factors.

D. REGRESSION RESULTS: POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND EFFICACIOUS PARTICIPATION

1. Dependent Variable: Participation

In order to test the direct, independent effect of political experience on empowerment, I regress both conventional and protest modes of participation (formal group activism and protest participation) on all relevant variables as independent controls.¹⁰¹⁷

Human and economic capital variables are introduced as independent variables in order to control for the effect of socio-economic status on participation. I define human capital as education level (number of years completed, 0-21) and age (years, 18-90). The second variable is a surrogate for informal education, since formal education has only recently become available to most younger Salvadorans and would bias the lower education levels of the older generation. Age reflects accumulated general experience. Economic capital is measured by reported family monthly income (which ranges from categorical values of less than \$80, \$80-132, \$132-230, \$230-344, \$344-459, and greater than \$459 per month). Agrarian incomes are highly dependent on secure access to land, therefore a dummy variable for land ownership was also included as a second economic capital variable.¹⁰¹⁸ Spatial factors may restrict or facilitate participation. Remoteness (distance) as potential exit restraint is a measure of social capital and defined as the distance in kilometers between a respondent's home and the urban town center, where many

¹⁰¹⁷ Other modes of participation (informal group activism, project participation, voting, and contacting local officials) were also regressed on this set of variables. The effect of political participation was positive and significant for some (voting, participation in women's groups, parent associations, contacting local officials), but lost significance as other variables were introduced for (informal group activism, project participation).

¹⁰¹⁸ The predictive strength of all SES indicators is limited due to the truncated socio-economic range of the rural sample. The narrowed difference between high and low values for income and education in rural areas increases the standard error of these variables, and thus negatively biases their predictive strength. Parent's SES and both indices of household and agricultural assets were introduced as alternatives to income and land, but none demonstrated stronger predictive power for any mode of participation.

civic meetings (*cabildos abiertos*) are held. However, most meetings are held within the communities themselves. Travel costs are an obvious disincentive to participate in *cabildos* in the same way that remoteness reduces the exit options that could potentially weaken community ties.¹⁰¹⁹

Political experience is modeled as a continuous variable with the scores shown above in Table 10.1 assigned to every respondent living in that community. Protest participation will be used as an independent predictor of conventional modes of participation, and as a dependent variable. As a dichotomous variable, protest will be measured as an independent dummy variable for ordinary least square analysis of formal group activism. Of the five items initially included in the scale variable – formal group activism, factor analysis revealed that two items, participation in religious and parent-teachers organizations, have insufficient covariance with the other three items (participation in local development organizations, cooperatives, and “other” local groups). The two poorly fitting items were dropped from the formal group activism, and the variable was reduced to a three-item scale.¹⁰²⁰

Equation 1 in Table 10.4 regresses the truncated formal group activism on political experience, controlling for SES factors of income, land ownership, age, and gender. Education was not significant as a predictor of frequent local group participation and was dropped. Formal group activism (frequency of participation in local groups dealing with local development issues) is highest among younger men who own land. Participation is also higher the more remote the respondent lives from the municipal center. Income is also positive and significant predictor of formal group activism. Yet even, after controlling for these human and economic capital factors, the political experience associated with insurgent communities is a positive significant predictor of this mode of conventional participation. The robust effect of insurgent political experiences on activism in community groups reinforces the suspicion toward any simplistic view of conventional and unconventional modes of participation.

Equation 2 adds two social capital variables (social ties and distance from municipal center) and a political capital variable (institutional access). The social ties variable is highly significant, suggesting that specific habits of reciprocity among neighbors underwrite local

¹⁰¹⁹ Distance between residence and town center ranged from 0 to 34 kilometers. An alternative urbanization variable that proved less useful was size of municipality to which respondent belonged.

¹⁰²⁰ When the full five item scale is regressed on the same combination of independent variables, the results are largely the same.

activism. Political capital in terms of institutional access is also highly significant suggesting a positive effect on participation. The spatial variable – distance between the community and the town center, is not significant. The variance explained increases substantially by just over 40% in equation 2, and the context variable of political experience remains a strong predictor of local participation in terms of its coefficient and its level of significance.

In equation 3, I add two efficacy variables. Political efficacy and subjective competence are both significant predictors of formal group activism.¹⁰²¹ However political efficacy is only significant the $p < .05$ level, suggesting the efficacy related to voting may not carry the same weight as other confidence measures. The addition of efficacy variables reduces the magnitude of the effect that insurgent past experiences have on current participation, but not its significance. This trend suggests an indirect (mediating) effect of political experience through efficacious attitudes. The explained variance of formal group activism improves again (by over 10%), underscoring the importance of efficacy for promoting local activism.

In equation 4, I add two achievement variables associated with FMLN challenging and bottom-up empowerment through conflict strategies. Decentralized decision making and local problem solving skills are both significant predictors of participation in local groups. Decentralized decision making is a measure of the collective or horizontal nature of community involvement in the most important local decisions. Local problem solving skills represent a similar measure of a community's capacity to identify, diagnose and propose solutions to local problems through collective, at times, contentious methods. This set of advocacy skills is associated with well organized communities and the variable represents the community mean for surveyed capacity to achieve these components of local problem solving.

¹⁰²¹ Other measures of mediating attitudes of empowerment were tested. Inter-personal trust, life satisfaction, system support, and religious non-fatalism were not significant. Optimism, development aspirations and preferences for social change were significant but added little additional explanatory power to the model.

Table 10.4 OLS Regression Results: Impact of Conflictive Political Experiences on Conventional Participation

Independent Variables	Formal Group Activism				
	1	2	3	4	5
Gender (1= female)	-1.1*** (.166)	-.954*** (.153)	-.896*** (.148)	-.86*** (.147)	-.822*** (.147)
Age	-.016** (.005)	-.015** (.005)	-.016** (.005)	-.012* (.005)	-.012* (.005)
Income	.180 ** (.061)	.158** (.057)	.125* (.055)	.136** (.054)	.144** (.054)
Landowner (dummy)	1.34*** (.189)	.965*** (.181)	.758*** (.176)	.693*** (.175)	.661*** (.174)
Political Experience	.588*** (.084)	.419*** (.097)	.368*** (.095)	.331*** (.094)	.25** (.098)
Social Capital: Social Ties		.091*** (.024)	.057* (.024)	.050* (.024)	.047* (.024)
Social Capital: Distance from nearest market		.01 (.01)	.011 (.01)	.005 (.01)	.005 (.01)
Political Capital: Institutional Access		.266*** (.026)	.220*** (.026)	.211*** (.026)	.193*** (.026)
Subjective Competence			.153*** (.022)	.131*** (.023)	.128*** (.023)
Political Efficacy			.060* (.03)	.044 (.03)	.043 (.03)
Decentralized Local Decision Making				.093** (.027)	.093** (.027)
Local Problem Solving Skills				.075* (.03)	.079* (.03)
Protest Participation					.636** (.224)
Constant	4.3*** (.40)	2.8*** (.47)	2.11*** (.49)	1.16* (.53)	.882* (.53)
R-squared	.270	.383	.428	.443	.450
Adj. R sq	.265	.376	.420	.434	.439
N	724	724	724	724	724

*** = $p < .001$; ** = $p < .01$; or better; * = $p < .05$; Standard errors in ().

Both achievement indicators are significant predictors of formal group participation, although they add only a small increment of explained variance. The low, positive correlations between social ties and political efficacy with decentralized local decision and contentious efficacy skills explains in part the loss of significance and decline in the magnitude of the coefficients for the former variables.

The final equation (5) introduces another achievement indicator – protest participation. The significant protest dummy variable suggests again that contentious and conventional modes of participation are not mutually exclusive. FMLN protesters are also presumably active in a wide variety of conventional local groups. Despite the addition of these three final variables clearly associated with FMLN communities in equations 4 & 5, the political experience context variable remains significant at the ($p < .01$) level, although its magnitude is trimmed somewhat. Together with gender, income, landownership, political capital, subjective self-confidence and decentralized local decision making, the persisting significance of the past collective insurgent experiences underscores the impact of context on formal group activism, both directly and indirectly through attitudes such as efficacy. Overall, this set of variables explains 45% of the variance in formal group activism, suggesting a relatively meaningful model.

To ensure that the standard errors for the coefficients of these variables that we found in Table 10.4 are robust for the respective cohorts of political experience for which I am attempting to control with the political experience variable, I will run the final two regression equations for each cohort independently. These regressions are summarized in Table 10.5, effectively controlling for political experience by separating the sample into three subsamples based on the political experience code. I have aggregated FMLN control and expansion samples ($n = 244$), to approximate the size of the Government expansion zone subsample ($n=272$) and Government control zone subsample ($n=396$).¹⁰²²

In equations 1, 3 and 5 shown in Table 10.5, I am regressing formal group participation on the most significant independent variables. In equations 2, 4 and 6, I am adding protest participation. The results largely validate the importance of past insurgent experience as a strong predictor of formal group participation, but also reveal several important qualifications of this argument.

¹⁰²² As in the first regression model, some cases are lost due to missing values. Replacing missing values with community means does not alter the results shown here.

Equations 1 & 2, representing the FMLN cohort, have the highest explained variance among the respective subsamples, but still remain 10% lower than the final equation 5 (Table 10.4) for the full sample. This is due in part to a smaller sample size. In all four models, political capital and subjective confidence are positive and highly significant predictors of formal group activism. Also, women are relatively unlikely to participate in comparison to men regardless of past political experience, although the magnitude of the effect is greater in government expansion and control communities.

Socioeconomic variables are positive and significant predictors of participation only in non-insurgent communities. This divergence between the subsamples represents an important correction to the significant effects we see in the full sample model. Without disaggregation of the sample, we could argue that the positive effect of land ownership (and income) on participation means that owning land represents an indication of status or wealth that translates into either the economic security or time to engage in politics. Land ownership could also be a positive incentive to participate as a safeguard measure - to maintain control over one's assets. Both rationales could explain the higher than average levels of participation in Tecoluca as a result of massive land redistribution. However, the non-significance of these factors (and negative sign for income) in FMLN communities (composing large parts of Tecoluca) suggest otherwise. The partial effect of land and income on participation is most evident within counter-insurgent communities, raising another possible explanation. We might infer that the significance in the full sample of the effect of income and land on participation is attributed to the persistence of higher inequality within insurgent communities in counter-insurgent communities. Social class is linked to participation only where inequality persists. By contrast, we may also say that the leveling of inequality in insurgent communities has not reduced participation. Redistribution of assets has merely reoriented the political opportunity structure for participation such that other factors become the driving force behind it.

Several additional distinctions between the insurgent and counter-insurgent participation models are worth noting. Social capital, in terms of perceived trust in the assistance of neighbors to help solve local problems and distance from the nearest town center, has a positive, significant effect on participation only in government control zone communities. By contrast, decentralized

Table 10.5 OLS Regression Results: Impact of Conflictive Political Experiences
on Conventional Participation by Cluster

Independent Variables	FMLN Control & Expansion Zones		Government Expansion Zone		Government Control Zone	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gender (1= female)	-1.4*** (.362)	-1.35*** (.364)	-.792** (.264)	-.734*** (.265)	-.569** (.181)	-.565** (.182)
Age	-.018 (.012)	-.019 (.012)	-.021* (.01)	-.02 (.01)	-.005 (.006)	-.005 (.006)
Income	-.064 (.179)	-.018 (.182)	.324** (.096)	.322** (.096)	.071 (.066)	.07 (.066)
Landowner (dummy)	0.481 (.40)	.425 (.402)	.682* (.324)	.736* (.324)	.726** (.23)	.712** (.23)
Social Capital: Social Ties	.04 (.056)	.026 (.057)	.058 (.044)	.06 (.044)	.069* (.031)	.068* (.031)
Social Capital: Distance from nearest market	-.002 (.018)	-.003 (.018)	-.02 (.029)	-.02 (.028)	.035* (.017)	.036* (.017)
Political Capital: Institutional Access	.193*** (.049)	.178** (.051)	.262*** (.052)	.246*** (.053)	.171*** (.037)	.165*** (.038)
Subjective Competence	.185** (.056)	.179** (.056)	.136** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.106*** (.029)	.106*** (.029)
Political Efficacy	.067 (.075)	.070 (.075)	.029 (.051)	.03 (.051)	.037 (.039)	.036 (.039)
Decentralized Local Decision Making	.237** (.077)	.224** (.078)	-.08 (.048)	.085 (.048)	.062 (.032)	.061 (.032)
Local Problem Solving Skills	.131 (.073)	.119 (.074)	-.012 (.054)	-.015 (.053)	.098* (.038)	.098* (.038)
Protest Participation		.475 (.382)		.896 (.516)	.309 (.386)	.309 (.386)
Constant	.212 (1.05)	.254 (1.05)	.622 (.76)	.529 (.755)	-.03 (.414)	-.048 (.414)
R-squared	.427	.432	.389	.398	.373	.375
Adj. R sq	.393	.395	.356	.362	.375	.350
N	197	197	212	212	313	313

local decision making is a considerably stronger predictor of insurgent participation (although the coefficient is nearly significant at the $p < .05$ level for government controlled zones. I distinguished between social ties as a generalized empowerment resource and decentralization local decision making as an empowerment achievement because the latter is more specific and derives from open ended questions related to the survey respondent's own choices of phrasing to describe who holds power locally. The first indicator describes hypothetical situations where social capital might be available, while the second describes actual decision making processes that have occurred. For these reasons, the relative weight of empowerment achievements on other achievements may be greater than for empowerment resources.

By this same standard, it is somewhat surprising local problem solving skills are significant predictors only for government control zone communities (although the coefficient for insurgent communities is positive and nearly significant at the ($p < .05$) level. This result suggests that local problem solving skills, including the professed capacity to pursue contentious tactics in the resolution of community problems is more relevant to formal group activism than among insurgent communities. By contrast, we know that actual reported protest participation in counter-insurgent communities is very low (5-8%) and tells us little about conventional participation in counter-insurgent controlled places (perhaps not surprising). More surprising is that protest participation also loses significance as a positive predictor in FMLN communities. We would have expected the effect of protest experiences to have increased within the FMLN subsample, but it did not. The effect is in fact stronger (although still not significant) in government expansion zones). While positive, the hypothesis that both contentious and conventional modes of participation go hand in hand for empowered communities is weakened when explaining formal group activism.

Logistic regression is used to evaluate the impact of political experience on protesting as a dependent variable. Of the full sample, 149 people or 16.5% reported participating in a protest activity in the past 12 months. Table 10.6 shows the logistic regression results for three equations predicting the impact of these same independent variables on protest activity. After controls for socio-economic status factors in Equation 1, FMLN contextual association with protest activism is unequivocal. The political experience variable remains highly significant and only declines slightly in magnitude, but still demonstrates a stronger effect than any other predictor in the three equations. In terms of the odds ratio, we can say that living in a

community with a past association with the FMLN makes one 3.2 times as likely to participate in protests. In other words, an insurgent context increases the probability of protest by 26%.¹⁰²³ In explaining contentious tactics, political experiences associated with the FMLN matter.

Gender (males), education, poverty (and at least initially, land ownership) are also significant predictors of protest participation, consistent with the direction suggested by the previous OLS equations. For income, an increase of one level in reported income make a person 24% less likely to participate in a protest. Women are again less likely than men to engage in protest actions and education is a positive predictor of such participation.

Social capital (social ties), political capital, formal group activism and subjective confidence all also increase the likelihood of protest, again only slightly diminishing the strong effect of insurgent political experiences. All but subjective confidence remain positive and significant predictors of protest in the final equation (3), although land ownership loses significance. The McFadden pseudo r-square value compares the likelihood of the null model with the maximum likelihood estimation. With all independent variables, Equation 3 explains 35% improvement in predictive efficiency from the null model.¹⁰²⁴

Equation 3 also underscores the hypothesized symbiosis between conventional participation and protest activism. Both informal local activism and civic engagement variables are highly significant and positive predictors of protest. There is little reason to view contentious and conventional action as mutually exclusive. Educated, politically and socially connected although less affluent men fit the profile of the most likely protestor given the significance of these three variables in all three equations. Surprisingly, other efficacy variables have little or no significant impact on protest activity (and are not shown).

¹⁰²³ The percent probability change was calculated by taking the 27% mean of FMLN insurgents in the overall sample as the prior probability level, dividing it by the probability of being non-insurgent (= .37), taking the LOG of this Odds Ratio of the prior probability level (= -.994), adding the coefficient for the political experience variable (-.994+1.16= .116), taking the anti-log of the new Odds Ratio (= 1.12), dividing by 1 plus the new Odds Ratio (= .716), and subtracting the prior probability (.528-.27= .26).

¹⁰²⁴ In other words, it explains a 30% reduction in deviance around the original error line.

Table 10.6 Logistic Regression: Impact of Conflictive Political Experiences on Protest Participation

	1					2					3				
Independent Variables	B	S.E.	Z	Sig.	Exp (b)	B	S.E.	Z	Sig.	Exp (b)	B	S.E.	Z	Sig.	Exp (b)
Gender	-.753	.250	-9.18	.003	2.12	-.767	.268	-8.18	.004	2.15	-.501	.287	-3.04	.081	1.65
Age	.008	.009	.81	.369	.992	.013	.01	1.89	.169	.987	.017	.01	2.91	2.91	.729
Education	.129	.034	14.1	.000	.879	.134	.038	12.4	.000	.874	.133	.04	11.0	.001	.876
Income	-.242	.109	-4.92	.027	1.27	-.303	.12	6.4	.011	1.35	-.308	.121	6.5	.011	1.36
Land Owner dummy	.604	.257	5.53	.019	.547	.47	.284	2.75	.097	.625	.315	.299	1.12	.291	.729
Social Capital: Distance	.012	.014	.797	.372	.988	.014	.015	.895	.344	.986	.01	.016	.378	.539	.99
Political Experience	1.16	.15	59.3	.000	3.2	1.19	.16	54.6	.000	3.3	1.14	.167	46.7	.000	3.13
Social Capital: Social Ties						.099	.042	5.63	.018	.91	.084	.044	3.7	.054	.92
Subjective Confidence						.108	.037	8.38	.004	.89	.033	.041	.66	.42	.97
Political Capital: Access to officials											.182	.043	17.6	.000	.834
Formal Group Activism											.156	.057	7.42	.006	.855
Constant	.945	.71	-1.78	.183		.094	.769	.015	.903		-.912	.817	-1.25	.264	
Chi-Square	213					233					268				
McFadden Rsq	.295					.347					.398				
Naglekerke Rsq	.394					.451					.507				
N	792					754					754				

When I regress protest participation on the disaggregated subsamples, we see a similar pattern to that evidenced in Table 10.5. The overall chi-square value drops significantly, particularly for the government expansion and control subsamples. Gender is no longer a significant predictor of protest participation in any of three subsamples, although the sign remains negative. There remains several notable differences between insurgent and counter-insurgent protest participation. The insurgent model is the best of three equations for explaining protest and the one for which most of the variables are significant. An increase in income significantly lowers the probability of protest participation in FMLN communities, although land ownership increases this same probability. Social capital appears to have greater impact on the probability of insurgent protest, than on conventional participation. Efficacy (subjective confidence) is a significant predictor of protest only in government expansion communities. Political capital is a positive predictor of the probability of protest in government controlled communities. The positive sign for formal group activism (nearly significant at $p < .06$) further supports the claim that protest and conventional activism are mutually reinforcing.

Table 10.7 Logistic Regression: Impact of Conflictive Political Experiences on Protest Participation by Cluster

Independent Variables	B	S.E.	Z	Sig.	Exp (b)	B	S.E.	Z	Sig.	Exp (b)	B	S.E.	Z	Sig.	Exp (b)
Gender	-.333	.361	.852	.356	1.35	-.995	.658	2.28	.131	2.7	-.226	.548	.171	.679	1.25
Income	-.623	.201	9.6	.002	1.86	.035	.194	.033	.856	.965	.08	.178	.197	.657	.924
Land Owner dummy	.769	.406	3.6	.06	.463	-1.2	.78	2.4	.122	3.33	.461	.593	.60	.437	.631
Social Capital: Social Ties	.167	.057	8.5	.003	.846	-.026	.102	.063	.801	1.03	.026	.085	.094	.759	.974
Subjective Confidence	.067	.054	1.51	.219	.935	.188	.096	3.8	.05	.829	-.04	.084	.215	.643	1.04
Political Capital: Access to officials	.157	.052	9.01	.003	.855	.166	.108	2.37	.124	.847	.275	.098	7.89	.005	.76
Formal Group Activism	.130	.069	3.53	.059	.878	.198	.141	1.98	.16	.622	.101	.15	.455	.50	.904
Constant	1.48	.582	6.5	.011		3.97	.982	16.3	.000		4.11	.706	33.9	.000	
Chi-Square	65					26					17				
McFadden Rsq	.228					.222					.117				
Naglekerke Rsq	.360					.266					.140				
N	207					237					345				

E. DISCUSSION: WHAT MAKES DECENTRALIZATION WORK?

Compared to communities that were loyal to the government during the war, insurgent communities associated with the FMLN are more active in local groups, they vote more, they contact officials more frequently, they participate in a wider range of project activities, and they are generally more involved in local problem solving decisions and actions. These results, I have argued, are in part a consequence of the FMLN's bottom-up, challenging approach to decentralization in places where they have governed over the past 15 years. This shift has not occurred within communities associated with the top-down, stabilizing approach to decentralization. In these communities, whose political experiences can often be traced to top-down counter-insurgent programs by the government, we find an almost complete abandonment of unconventional political orientations and practices. Indeed, the evidence presented in this chapter shows that contextual experiences linked to FMLN influence have empowered individuals to negotiate conventional access to political institutions, but also reveal a complementary capacity for contentious, collective action if or when conventional processes fail. The traces of government counter-insurgent governance reveal much lower levels of participation, lower sense of efficacy and weak social ties. It is under these conditions that decentralization most likely strengthens the hand of local elites and leads to political capture of public goods. It is hard to underestimate the importance of lower land inequality in FMLN control zones as a necessary element of effective decentralization – a trend that runs counter to the reconcentration of land in other zones and nationally. How can we explain the empowerment of communities associated with past political experiences of insurgency?

Controlling for the contextual effect of political experience sharpens, not diminishes, the differences in efficacious participation between FMLN and GOES communities. Within both FMLN and ARENA municipalities, the survey results suggest a strong association between FMLN influence during the war and the adoption of democratic attitudes and behaviors during the post-war period. Undoubtedly, the emergence of democratic culture in El Salvador has been mediated by repression and violence. However, examining the types of responses by civil

society to repression indicate the emergence of important sub-national differences. Some Salvadoran communities (in zones controlled by the FMLN) effectively resisted repression. Effective resistance endowed those participants with a sense of efficacy that is dramatically higher than non-FMLN zones. Not all FMLN communities effectively resisted the Salvadoran security forces (or FMLN repression, although to a much lesser extent). Passive collaboration in FMLN expansion zones is associated with lower levels of efficacy common to zones of counter-insurgent government influence.

The results of the OLS and Logistic regressions illustrate that political experience is a robust and significant predictor of both formal group activism and protest participation. The evidence here seems to contradict the claim made by some that repression tends only to destroy levels of social and political capital. Experiences of highly uncivic, violent and empowered resistance to repression is shown to be associated with stronger democratic attitudes and behaviors, at the same time retaining, redefining and adapting motivations and tactics that challenge the post-war democratic political opportunity structure. In the most clear cut area of empowerment achievement, communities associated with FMLN control have in fact gained political capital as a consequence of their insurgent experiences and continue to reproduce this capital in the post-war period.¹⁰²⁵

This conflict - empowerment association is advanced with several caveats:

1. Levels of participation are generally low. Indicators of formal group activism point to a level of participation in all communities that seems surprisingly low given the widely declared commitments to institutionalizing participation in the local development documentation that was consulted. Why is participation so low, and why are FMLN communities more active than others? One reason may be the Salvadorans living in areas traditionally closed to FMLN influence are more fearful to engage local politics. A surrogate for fear (a respondent's choosing not to declare who whom they voted, "one's vote is secret") is associated with lower levels of participation. For many the trauma of the war has left an impression that any form of community activity is suspicious. A landless farmer who resides in a community that was previously a government expansion zone vividly recalled an experience that had occurred 18 years earlier in

¹⁰²⁵ If associating or participating in local groups is considering social capital, then FMLN communities have gained in this resource area as well.

his cantón, “We heard that FINATA (land reform agency) was distributing the land of a *patron* in the neighboring community. Some men from our village got together and went to ask this *patron* for land. A few days later, several of the men were found dead, maybe killed by this same *patron*. People here are still afraid to ask for things, there is even fear of voting. Anyway *para uno de pobre* (for the poor like us) things don’t change, you die with the *cuma* in hand.”¹⁰²⁶

Despite higher reported levels of self-confidence, FMLN communities were not immune to the climate of uncertainty and fear that prevailed in the early post-war period. Former combatant and current mayor of Tecoluca, Carlos Cortes, explains how fear was one of the many political challenges facing insurgent post-war rule:

Tecoluca has been through a lot to legitimate itself - overcoming institutionalized fear, armed destabilization, the disadvantageous political climate and the practical challenges of conducting an alternative development experiment in an economically destroyed zone. We were called “communists” and “terrorists” and offered no assistance when systematic attacks were directed at us in 1994 and 1995. There were moments of real frustration, when we wanted to settle things with violence. After disarming, we felt we had one hand tied behind our backs. Everyone was nervous all the time, getting off of a bus or eating at a restaurant. Even now, after twelve years in the war, and five years as a council representative, it feels like the revolution never arrives, that we are just navigating in open waters. (Carlos Cortés, Nov. 17, 1998)

A GTZ-Promude study of San Vicente assessing the program’s experience in participatory methodology and municipal strengthening concluded that the nature of collective action strategies in response to fear, uncertainty, and the many other challenges of post-war decentralized development had much to do with prior experiences “community level participation in organizational structures is limited, although this has much to do with the type of leadership that exists, and is a response to *prior processes and experiences*. One of the factors

¹⁰²⁶ Interview, anonymous, Santiago Nonualco, October, 1998. Editorials by The Jesuit University (UCA) weekly publication, *Proceso*, have articulated this view that a majority of civil society feels unrepresented in the current political system, but remains stigmatized by fear of retaliation to act (see for example July 23, 1997 edition). The best treatment of voter abstention offers some evidence on this score (Barnes and Cruz, 1998; Barnes, 1998). Voter abstention among Salvadorans old enough to vote have risen steadily: 34% in 1984, 54.9% in 1989, dropping slightly to 47% in 1994, then rising again to 61.9% in 1997, 61.4% in 1999 and 63% in 2000. High and growing levels of voter abstention in El Salvador (see discussion and Figure 1b below) reinforce a skepticism of the Salvadoran political class, and underscore civil society’s fear of assuming its required role in the democratic transition. I do not know how widely among the professional elite this view is shared. Despite recent electoral gains by the FMLN, interviews with numerous NGO leaders suggest that widespread, mutual distrust continues to divide the party leadership and the country’s professional class.

that is worth recognizing is their identification of organizations, during the war, as representatives of movements in opposition to the government, for which there now persists in many people a fear of community organization, in order to avoid not being identified as before.”¹⁰²⁷

The same report also found that political experience during the war and its reinforcement through shared commitments to equity, fairness, and social justice that shape community life, are critical in how this cycle is apparently broken:

There was evidence in Tecoluca and San Esteban Catarina (the only two FMLN governed municipalities at the time of this 1995 study), of a greater identification among the people toward their communal organizations, moreover, these same organizations are represented through elected leaders in other organizations at the cantón level... Experiences of violence during the war depleted trust in most authority, and may have reinforced peasant traditionalism, individualism, and fatalism. However this pattern is weakest among FMLN communities, *perhaps because the violence was mediated by an organizational structure that transformed violence into an empowering experience* (1995: 75, italics added).

Many ex-combatants echoed the recollection offered by one farmer in Tecoluca. “During the war the people here were taught how to participate, and they learned many things that before being organized, they didn’t know ... In the communities where the people didn’t organize, participation is motivated more by ‘if I have a need’ and not whether the group has a need. In other (these) communities no, they see the thing globally.” (in Fogaroli and Stowell, 1997:198). Participation was learned under the political induction of revolutionary leadership. It is therefore no surprise to find more activist communities led by demobilized FMLN leaders.

However, the dissolution of the intense organizing conditions of the war is just as likely to explain the barriers to participation faced by a demobilized civil society suggested in the overall low levels of activism illustrated above. Ex-combatants have described a decompression that occurred in the post-war period from accumulated deprivation and unfulfilled expectations. Withdrawal, excess, demoralization, corruption, and dependence on donated goods and services are responses to the severe and exhausting sacrifices made during a decade of war. Families separated and grieving for lost or absent family members fall into a post-traumatic despair that

¹⁰²⁷ Promude/GTZ (1996: 75-76). It might be considered that the so-called GTZ-Promude experts in participatory methodologies share part of the blame for prevailing low participation in some municipalities.

contributes to alcoholism and social violence. Capable military leaders sometimes prove to be poor community leaders. It is all the more remarkable that Tecoluca and FMLN communities have escaped, in a relative sense, the total collapse of their organizational structure.

2. Durable gender gaps weaken the generally positive contextual effect of FMLN influence on participation: Much of the discussion of empowerment directs attention to the relative improvement of women as the most vulnerable social actor. Not surprisingly then, gender proves to be one of the most important predictors of participation. Throughout the war, the FMLN raised the banner of equity in gender roles. To a large degree, FMLN combatants symbolized a revolutionary leap in feminist goals as women served in highly visible leadership roles and female combatants made up one of the highest percentages of any military in Latin American history (Mason 1992; Luciak 1998, 1999; Kampwirth 1998; González and Kampwirth 2001). The FMLN has pressed a pro-feminist legislative agenda, and instituted internal rules allotting women candidates 30% of all electoral candidacies. At the same time, post-war biographies and surveys have stripped down some of the more romantic notions of gender equality within the FMLN. Gross violations of women's rights within their ranks have also been revealed. The gender focus has also declined within the FMLN legislative agenda, crowded out by other political fights.

Given this mixed record on gender issues, it may not be surprising that the survey results show that a gender gap between the participation and attitudes of men and women in FMLN communities has been preserved in spite of revolutionary commitments to gender and other forms of equality.¹⁰²⁸ However, the absolute gap that separates FMLN women from women in other communities implies that a revolutionary experience has had a relatively empowering effect on women in general. That is to say that women have acquired greater social and political capital within FMLN zones of influence than women in other zones. Most striking is the absolute gap between women in FMLN control zone communities hold over men in GOES zone communities in terms of participation levels, civic engagement and efficacy. Nevertheless, the

¹⁰²⁸ One example of the pendulum movement of women's issues within FMLN organizations is the female quota of 30% of all candidates, achieved in 1997. Despite the existence of this statute, when left to the discretion of the departmental and municipal conventions, only 17% of the candidates nominated locally for the March 2000 elections were women. Several FMLN campaign directors suggested that the larger ideological struggle within the party had suppressed other debates, including gender equity questions.

50% abstention rates in reported voting in FMLN expansion zones and the persistent gap between men and women's participation both signal that women remain second-class citizens in many aspects of local development.

F. CONCLUSION

I have argued that political experience matters for explaining political culture and its link to decentralized development in post-war El Salvador. Embedded within the Salvadoran process of post-war reconstruction, divergent political experiences have shaped different local political sub-cultures, which are linked to stabilizing or challenging empowerment strategies - the outcomes of which can be compared and evaluated. The survey evidence presented here clearly supports the assumption and hypotheses stated at the outset: 1) there exist substantive differences in political culture between insurgent and counter-insurgent case study municipalities and political populations of influence, 2) contrary to the prevailing political diagnoses that continue to delegitimize contentious politics as undermining democracy, the strongest democratic attributes are found within the most contentious insurgent culture, 3) experiences of insurgent political socialization linked to support for the FMLN represent a durable predictor of empowered participation in local development.

Survey respondents were asked to what extent they supported radical change by revolutionary means, gradual improvements through reforms, or valiant defense against revolutionary movements, as the preferable description of how society should be changed. A full six years after the fighting had ceased, one in four Tecolucans and people living in FMLN zones of control state a preference for radical, even violent means of social change. Does this finding present threat to the fragile democratic process underway in El Salvador as Inglehart (1997) has suggested. I argue that, in fact, it demonstrates the strength of civil society to defend itself against predatory forces, and a critical insurance policy should conventional democratic practices

fail in settings with weak mechanisms of formal political competition. In considering this choice between radical and gradual social change, one elderly Tecolucan veteran of the war, who had lost 3 brothers and 3 sons in the war, opted for radical change through revolutionary means, but carefully explained his choice. “A democratic country should constantly revolutionize, but not only through war, nor words, but with *concertación* (consensus building).”¹⁰²⁹ The complexity of political culture in Tecoluca, and areas in the paracentral region of El Salvador that have developed under the influence of the FMLN, could not be better articulated. Democracy is not the absence of conflict, but rather struggle for the conditions under which consensus truly becomes possible.

Revolution has left an imprint on the formation of local political culture and oppositional structure. These findings underscore the differential impact of two very different approaches to decentralization. Post-war decentralized development in El Salvador has favored a consensus-oriented, stabilizing, empowerment by invitation approach. Yet, a consensus empowerment explanation cannot account for the variation in attitudes and behaviors I have described. A contentious and disruptive empowerment through conflict approach of rural communities in FMLN and non-FMLN areas of El Salvador presents a more complex and satisfactory explanation of local development than the prevalent notion of conflictive politics as deviant and socially alienated. Contentious politics in the paracentral zone of El Salvador have produced the strongest evidence of efficacious participation, where according to conventional theory about political culture and participation theory, we might least expect it. These findings suggest that the dominant consensus approach to decentralized development may over-emphasize the non-conflictive resources of “social capital” and “civic culture.” Far from a force for social decay, the revolutionary contribution of Tecoluca and the FMLN insurgent influence more generally in the paracentral region of El Salvador has been to democratize political culture, suggesting an important revision to how we traditionally understand the conditions under which decentralized development works.

¹⁰²⁹ Interview, Santa Monica, Tecoluca, Aug. 25, 1998.

XI. CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS - TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EMPOWERMENT

One may conclude that the wellsprings of human freedom lie not only where Marx saw them, in the aspirations of classes about to take power, but perhaps even more in the dying wail of a class over whom the wave of progress is about to roll. (Barrington Moore 1966)

This dissertation is about decentralization and agrarian politics in post-war El Salvador (1992-1998). Decentralization of government has been prescribed widely in Latin America over the past two decades, justified on the premise that it encourages more accountable governance by empowering local actors. However, under conditions of high inequality and weak democracy, decentralization tends to reinforce already existing distributions of power and is frequently captured instead by powerful elites as a top-down strategy for preserving their interests. Given this ambiguous mandate, a performance standard for empowered local actors is required.

Following a line of inquiry established by Amartya Sen, I propose a novel conceptualization of empowerment as my dependent variable that is multidimensional and is examined at three levels of analysis (individual, meso-organizational, macro-societal). I hypothesize that under conditions of high inequality and weak institutions, decentralization works (i.e. empowerment is achieved) when local actors acquire capital resources and through collective action they contest inequality to convert those resources into sustainable livelihood improvements and more favorable power relations. Effective decentralization can therefore be contentious and may disempower local actors when collective action problems are insurmountable.

El Salvador has decentralized government in the post-war period on the premise that it necessarily encourages more accountable governance by empowering local actors. Achieving empowerment or converting resources into achievements under conditions of high inequality and

weak democracy depends upon collective action. Decentralized development in settings often relegates these collective action problems to unplanned, individualist strategies or reliance on the coercion or benevolence of a hegemonic actor. An alternative approach surmounts collective action problems through negotiated agreements or strategies that are motivated by community norms of fairness and reciprocity. I apply this template of collective action options (referred to here as Market, Hierarchy, Contract and Community strategies) to the various challenges posed by decentralization in post-war El Salvador. This analysis is guided by the hypothesis of Lichbach that Market and Hierarchy collective action strategies are most likely to preserve inequality while Contract and Community collective action strategies are more likely to challenge inequality. The capacity for local collective action to confront entrenched inequality represents the central dilemma for making decentralization work in El Salvador.

In El Salvador, two competing empowerment strategies may be distinguished. Empowerment by invitation is a top-down, elite brokered process of political negotiation, premised upon a positive sum distribution of the benefits and a prior acceptance of the rules of the game. Empowerment through conflict, on the other hand, implies a bottom-up, zero-sum contestation of political benefits, as well as very rules and privileges that assure elites a cut of any subsequent benefit distribution. The FMLN employed an empowerment through conflict approach, emphasizing an inherent conflict of interest between elite and non-elite groups over a zero-sum distribution of power resources. With counter-insurgent aims, the Government of El Salvador pursued an empowerment by invitation approach, based on an imposed consensus over the acceptable rules of political expression that sought to preserve unequal property rights and political privileges of the elite (Karl 1986).

Explaining why individuals, communities or organizations opted for either empowerment strategy turns our attention to political opportunity and to history, in other words, the specific shifts in structural configurations of elites or institutional rules and the network mobilization capacity of political entrepreneurs. Tracing these more or less durable elements of political opportunity helped delineate the conditions under which insurgent and counter-insurgent action choices were made. These political experiences have opened or closed space for Salvadoran peasants to choose revolution, counter-insurgent resistance or neutrality in during civil war in El Salvador.

To assess the performance of these competing empowerment strategies, I conduct a most similar case study comparison of three conflictive municipalities in the paracentral region of El Salvador that differ in one fundamental factor: their respective insurgent, hard-line counter-insurgent and moderate counter-insurgent political histories. Using survey analysis and process tracing, the evidence shows that where decentralization reinforced a process of diminishing inequality (Tecoluca) local actors were empowered to collect more local taxes, provide better services, attain more far reaching institutional coordination, and achieve efficacious participation. The persistence of high inequality in both counter-insurgent cases weakened mechanisms for participation, accountability and transparency that in turn made decentralization highly susceptible to bureaucratic resistance, corruption and the prioritization of elite interests – in other words, political capture.

A. DECENTRALIZATION – THE QUIET REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE

Decentralization in El Salvador was part of a broader reaction throughout Latin America to the political opportunity triggered by the collapse of the Latin American developmentalist state in the early 1980s. This crisis set in motion a combination of political, social and economic realignments. The revival of municipal government and emergence of social safety net programs and NGOs can be viewed as the product of strategic negotiation between stability oriented elite reformers from above and challenge oriented contentious social movements from below.

The Latin American state found itself wracked by an unprecedented loss of legitimacy, hemmed in by increasing democratization, dismantled by conditionality of neoliberalism, and confronted by the strident demands for equity and participation by transnational social movements. Latin American elites had little choice but to decentralize state functions as a way of preserving their teetering economic and political systems. Given these cross-cutting constraints, ruling elites often pushed down decentralization reforms from above to placate and stabilize a peripheral (rural) electoral coalition as realignment and power redistribution occurred within the urban coalition.

Decentralization has emerged from a remarkable convergence of interests between the ascending neoliberal faction and the descending traditional, largely agrarian faction of Latin American political leaders. Handpicked local actors have been invited to help implement decentralization programs that range in form from counter-insurgent civic action programs to anti-poverty complements of structural adjustment. This “reactionary alliance” introduced social safety nets, revived local government and co-opted many NGOs with the principal objective of resisting contentious and potentially more transformative challenges from below.

Decentralization was also embraced by social movements as a political means for expediting the demise of corrupt, authoritarian governments. In the case of El Salvador, decentralization became a de facto governance and mobilization strategy within insurgent controlled zones. The dramatic rise of NGOs was clearly associated with social movement opposition to authoritarian rule in Latin America that helped open political space for decentralization. However, the effectiveness of NGOs in directly challenging top-down decentralization is much less clear due to their frequent acceptance of the established rules for political participation.

This dramatic local turn in development policy, what the World Bank has called a quiet revolution, has also occurred despite significant gaps between the theory and expected performance of local institutions. Effective decentralization assumes that local actors will find it easier to act collectively to hold local institutions more accountable than remote, poorly informed, centralized, often times corrupt agencies. Significant responsibilities are shifted from the state to local governments, non-governmental organizations, civic associations -- to civil society itself, which is assumed to hold a comparative information and accountability advantage in tailoring local services to client needs, deepening participation, and advocating for citizen interests. The inefficiencies and inequities attributed to centralization are best countered by forcing decentralized state institutions and levels of government to compete for citizen votes and taxes. Decentralization finds support among neoliberal reformers as a politically more palatable means for privatization or structural adjustment and among post-structuralists in the promotion of a cultural politics of local self-determination. Decentralization has also been promoted in some cases to diffuse social and political tensions, using autonomy in the midst of ethnic or separatist conflict as a way of preserving power.

In effect, all theoretical approaches to decentralization seek to empower citizens to hold the state and themselves more accountable for their own development. The metaphor of a *virtuous circle* is used to describe how the state and local networks of civil society organizations and local government become locked in a two-way dynamic of pressures for accountability that results in improved government.

Local development actors have rushed in to fill the void left by a state weakened from structural adjustment reform. Several conditions for successful decentralization have been noted. Decentralization is expected to work where local governments are of adequate size, have acquired administrative skills and autonomy over local revenue generation, and rest upon a well-defined division of labor that provides the capacity to coordinate both horizontally (across NGOs, local governments) and vertically (upward with the line ministries of the state and downward with communities). Coordination in the management and delivery of local public goods essential for rural development--roads, technical assistance services, power, telecommunications, irrigation, education, public health, sanitation, and security, are identified as some of the principal collective action challenges to effective decentralization. In the provision of decentralized local public goods, collective action is necessary in the mobilization of money, labor and material resources, the design of rules governing resource use, the monitoring of rule compliance, and the enforcement of sanctions against rule breakers – all of which must be coordinated between jurisdictions of government.

These expectations for decentralization are often frustrated in the prevailing context of inequality and bureaucratic self-interest that decentralization was also intended to protect. Decentralization tends to strengthen the distribution of power that exists *ex ante* at the local level. In counter-insurgent contexts of high inequality, stabilizing, top-down decentralization tends to empower local elites almost exclusively, just as it fragments local interests and exacerbates local capacity for collective action. Under these conditions the chances of political capture are high. A result of the top-down approach to decentralization, levels of participation in local development tend to be low, individualized, avoiding sustained contentious action, and lacking a sense of efficacy.

In contexts of relative greater equity, challenging, bottom-up decentralization under conditions of improving local equity tends to empower a wider cross-section of people and further reduces the obstacles to collective action. Empowered participation tends to be the highest where power asymmetries have been historically leveled. Decentralized participation

from the bottom-up will be more participatory, combine both conventional and contentious modes of action, involve more collective effort, and generate a greater sense of efficacy among the participants.

Absent the necessary safeguards against political capture, the emergence of NGOs, social safety nets and local government may effectively stabilize political support for neoliberal reforms and in turn, an equally exclusive and disempowering political and economic system. Given decentralization's ambiguous mandate, this dissertation questions whether the trend toward greater localism and a smaller state is in the interest of El Salvador's rural poor. These political and economic realignments associated with decentralization have increased the political space for local actors, but have they empowered them? How might we evaluate the pro-poor claims of decentralization – specifically in terms of empowerment?

B. INSURGENT AND COUNTER-INSURGENT POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

These questions are answered in part by examining the history of how local institutional endowments have taken shape. Local institutional performance today has a great deal to do with choices people made in the recent past. In tracing the conflictive and consensual origins of the local institutions from the pre-war period in El Salvador, three factors of the political opportunity structure (agrarian structure, elite access and repression) explain the competing empowerment strategies deployed by the FMLN and the military-government and how people in the case study communities responded to them. Prior to the war, agrarian inequality was deepened by the modernization and export orientation of agriculture a process that marginalized a peasant labor force that for years had been subsisting as *colonos* in stable relations with area landowners. Growing economic anxiety and intransigence among the landed elite blocked all meaningful political and economic reform initiatives. These shifts eroded long-standing peasant-landlord relations.

Two main catalysts help explain how the rural poor reacted. Increased access to dissident political and religious elites and experiences of gross acts of violence altered the pre-war political opportunity structure for collective action. The progressive Catholic Church, Christian

Democrat politicians and revolutionary organizations all provided elite leadership for channeling rural and urban grievances toward conflictive mobilization tactics. The reactionary Catholic church and paramilitary organizations stifled rural unrest or steered it toward defense of elite interests.

The types of local collective mobilization or individual actions chosen to survive pre-war violence begin to distinguish two competing empowerment strategies. Framed by definitive local turning points, choices made in the run up to civil war set otherwise similar neighboring communities on one of three possible paths – revolution, reform or reactionary counter-insurgent defense of the status quo. In Tecoluca, a five year period of building Christian base communities and a parallel effort to recruit and train insurgent cadre preceded the first shock of massive repression. The massacre at *La Cayetana* strengthened the movement to challenge agrarian relations. In the Jiboa Valley, where the impact of the popular church was less and reactionary political forces found a strong following, an episode of massive repression was capable of annihilating any base of resistance to the prevailing coffee oligarchy. In San Ildefonso, a combination of weak religious influence and insurgent violence toward a widely supported cooperative movement closed off potential participation in actively challenging local inequality, but also mitigated a deeper commitment to counter-insurgency. Instead, in San Ildefonso we find an allegiance to the personalities and accommodative policies of the Christian Democrats, and in particular, the promise of agrarian reform.

In the run-up to war, the onset of political democratization as well as the rather slow, methodical process of discovery that had been possible within Christian base communities and rural peasant unions, were strangled early by military repression, which then escalated to a full-blown and bloody contest over national power and property rights. The civil war brought both change and continuity. Some communities had leadership and capacity forged over a decade of training and collective action, others were swept into the chaos with little preparation or understanding at all.

Over the course of the civil war, competing insurgent and counter-insurgent strategies experimented with new institutions and governance rules at the local level to win peasant sympathies. Decentralized mobilization strategies were necessitated by the sheer scope, duration and intensity of the conflict. Within zones of military control, the authoritarian character of government rule was unabashedly top-down, ruthless, and opposed to any civic participation that

served no counter-insurgent function. The conscription of soldiers and coerced service of civil patrols, the revival of municipal government and state managed agrarian reform cooperatives the three fundamental pillars of the government counter-insurgency strategy to incorporate local populations as a buffer against FMLN recruitment.

My research suggests that the motivations for participation in the insurgency had less to do with greed or other material incentives than to principled beliefs and the perceived threats of repression. In fact, few the grievance-based, rationalist or structural explanations for peasant rebellion by themselves can not account for the patterns of insurgent participation found in the paracentral region. Civilians were also recruited by the FMLN as a buffer between them and the military, but those rebels interviewed expressed considerably greater voluntarism than the among Armed Forces recruits. Repression, by itself, does not tell us enough about the actions in collaboration or full participation as a combatant with the FMLN. The evidence associated with those that did participate on both sides, suggest that multiple factors, some structural and others attitudinal, combine to explain how the insurgents were able to continue recruiting new combatants and collaborators over nearly two decades.

If only within zones of FMLN control, the insurgency brought with it a transforming process that rendered the pre-war authority structure and the associated agrarian land structure on which it rested, null and void,. Command was also vertical but notably different in the self-imposed limits set on this power. FMLN authority derived from an underlying respect for human dignity, the delegation of governing authority to local populations and the goal of equity in property redistribution. The asymmetric nature of the conflict forced insurgent commanders to delegate responsibilities and decision making power to the thousands of community organizers, and the masses of peasants, women, elderly, children that supported them.

While many of these new leaders transitioned from pre-war roles as catechists, students, and peasant union leaders, their experiences during the war required new skills and often the ascription of multiple identities. Insurgent populations invented new local institutions (militia, popular local governments, independent cooperatives, repopulation movements, and eventually NGOs) to survive and resist the government efforts to re-establish pre-war agrarian relations. As such, the collective experiences in FMLN controlled zones involved significant increases in the confidence of opposition communities. This analysis breaks with some research on the Salvadoran conflict by asserting that greater voluntarism and local autonomy existed within

FMLN zones of control and distinguished the FMLN empowerment strategy. At the same time, insurgent culture was punctuated by deep fissures of distrust and suspicion that were a legacy of clandestine organizing, betrayal and the suffering of gross acts of violence directed from both sides.

In effect, decentralization occurred in both insurgent and counter-insurgent controlled and contested zones as de facto governance strategies where the war had destroyed prevailing structures of rule. Municipal government was revived and NGOs were invented as political necessities in a climate of violence and struggle for the sympathies of the Salvadoran population. Decentralized rule was essential because the heightened stakes of winning or sustaining the allegiance of rural “hearts and minds” led intentionally or unintentionally to the authentic or apparent empowerment of local populations to set their own terms for participation.

Both types of local institutions, to differing degrees, have evolved from instruments for decentralization and political capture by both parties to the conflict. Before the war, most NGOs eschewed politics and most small town mayors discharged a narrow political mandate set by local landowning elites in the ruling party. Preserving the stability of agrarian inequality was the paramount goal. During the war, local institutions were endowed with unprecedented responsibilities and authority. Tempered by this conflict, competing visions and capacities for local development and democracy were both forged in the furnace of civil war.

During the “high intensity conflict” period of the war (1980-1984), the FMLN eliminated traditional local government within liberated territory and experimented with alternative institutions, such as the *Poderes Populares Locales*, while the civilian-military regime targeted a moderate cooperative sector in its attempt to stabilize rural unrest through an ambitious agrarian reform. In the “low-intensity conflict” stage of the war (1984-1989), the electoral success of the Christian Democrats combined with an expansion of government air power to force the FMLN to break up its battalions into smaller, more coordinated but independent mobile units. The insurgent focus turned to political organizing and refugee land repopulations. The government civic pacification programs focused on restoring the authority of rural mayors. The proliferation of NGOs and the revival of local government represented insurgent and counter-insurgent preparations for peace and set the stage for a new chapter of political struggle around decentralized development in the post-war period.

C. THE POST-WAR POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR DECENTRALIZATION

When the political war ended in 1992, the experiences that distinguished those individuals and communities that chose revolution, reform or reactionary counter-insurgent defense of the status quo were so profoundly rooted that they would shape the expectations and behaviors of a generation of Salvadorans that came of age in this period. In short, a twelve year civil war brought into sharp relief a Salvadoran countryside governed by two parallel states, two political-economic systems, and in turn, two competing conceptions of citizen empowerment. Distinct political experiences involving war-time decentralization were deeply marked the post-war institutionalization of local authority in NGOs, municipal governments and their articulation with social safety net programs. Thus, the assigned roles, interests and performance of these local actors in decentralized post-war reconstruction vary according to their respective underlying aggregate political experiences and their associated empowerment strategies. As the dominant forces in national politics, the FMLN and ARENA incorporated these new local actors into their mobilization networks as a way of adapting wartime empowerment strategies to the shifts in the post-war political opportunity structure.

Three important macro-level linkages are evident between the post-war shifts in the political opportunity structure, the emergence of decentralization as a policy initiative and the respective insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies. First, decentralization began to gain national traction as a policy option in El Salvador only after the FMLN became more competitive as a political opponent to ARENA and made rapid electoral gains, particularly at the municipal and legislative level. However, ARENA also viewed decentralization as a way of redistributing power within its ruling coalition. Second, decentralization transferred power to local institutions embedded within a rural economy in rapid decline, falling far short of the expectations for the economic performance of local institutions. Third, post-war inequality of land and income have remained very high nationally, suggesting that the capacity for collective action remains important for post-war decentralized rural development.

The political and economic implications of the Peace Accords triggered a profound recomposition within the principal insurgent and counter-insurgent political movements and the

diversification of their respective mobilization strategies. By trading political concessions to the FMLN in return for control over the economy, the Peace Accords enabled ARENA to achieve its primary goal of social and political stability and insulate an economic agenda that emphasized massive state privatization and trade liberalization. However, the political cost was an unsettling transition within the ruling coalition that favored those elites that had diversified their interests beyond agriculture, and punished those elites most dependent upon agrarian rents. The latter extracted political concessions to cushion their economic decline and resisted the distributive goals of peace process from within the key posts of post-war government. The restoration of civil authority over the military also meant that enforcing the priorities of the party would require a set of collective action strategies less dependent on coercion. ARENA used decentralization to enrich the modernizers in its party while placating dissenting elites. Little new space was opened for local actors.

The FMLN ceded control of the economy in exchange for political reforms and an economic reinsertion package for ex-combatants. Electoral gains, increasingly weighted by urban turnout, secured new legislative and municipal power and consolidated the FMLN's place as the principal opposition party. The FMLN has improved the accountability of key political institutions and ensured the monitoring and compliance of the most contentious aspects of the Peace Accords. However, recurrent internal divisions have limited the FMLN's political success as well as the party's ability to improve the quality of life of much of the insurgent rural base. Lacking the same normative incentives and institutional allies to rally collective action in its base as during the war, the FMLN has also ceded greater autonomy to new local actors (NGOs, municipal and community authorities) in order to shore up its own mobilization network. Decentralization and local economic development have provided the means for reinventing the principled incentives for collective action during the war and for channeling significant resources to local actors as a platform to mount contentious challenges at the national level.

Both insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies promoted decentralization in response to a transition between new and old elites. However, the ongoing recomposition of insurgent and counter-insurgent mobilization networks has played out differently. For ARENA, the fundamental shift was **horizontal**, between one faction of the Salvadoran oligarchy to another. Decentralization responded to the modernizing elite's top priority of safeguarding economic reforms, but also to a steady effort to expand the party's base and to consolidate its

control over large parts of the countryside. However, the mere promise of devolution of power to municipal authority plus the selective distribution of benefits to the hard-line agrarian elite were sufficient to maintain broad party loyalty and preserve the capacity to mobilize its rural base during elections. Control over the spoils of public office has enabled ARENA to manage the realignment of ruling coalition elites with relatively lower political costs.

For the FMLN, the fundamental shift has been **vertical**, with more new leaders ascending or entering politics from municipal office, the NGO field or grassroots gremios. Local actors have opened the space for themselves in a process that has been both expansive and unpredictable – rupturing in some localities the exclusionary pattern of development. Without the capacity to redistribute state patronage, this impulse from below sparked the FMLN's promotion of decentralization as a central element in its electoral strategy. Decentralization was being pulled down from below by the FMLN, which had to rely much more on the actual improvement of self-governance at the municipal level. The acquisition of political credibility in local governance by FMLN mayors, councils and NGOs opened unprecedented space within Salvadoran society and within the party itself for the inclusion of a new class of elites and interests.

ARENA's political control of the Presidency has nevertheless ensured that post-war decentralized development in El Salvador has generally favored a top-down, stabilizing, **empowerment by invitation** approach. Beginning with the National Reconstruction Plan, policy making decision processes related to issues that had been at the core of the civil war were effectively sealed off from the domain of citizen participation. With a mix of coercion and clientelism, ARENA invited citizens to participate only in those matters considered politically safe and therefore often irrelevant. In this empowerment by invitation approach to decentralization, elites have legitimized conventional and non-violent forms of political expression and actively discredited contentious forms of challenge to their historic political and economic privilege.

Counter-insurgent decentralization was designed to restore a modicum of electoral democracy at the national level, recapture local political authority and undermine the legitimacy of the FMLN through top-down reconstruction programs. Political competition within the ARENA-controlled ruling coalition gave rise to multiple state agencies charged with local development responsibilities. Most of the critical decisions, from the creation of these

institutions to their budget allocations, were taken at the top with almost no participation by the affected population. Among the various government agencies charged with attending local needs, there has been a tendency to pursue individual strategies with local target populations rather than coordinate more broadly. Competition for development resources rather than coalition building as a means for strengthening local populations, became the norm.

The FMLN organized local forces to demand both fiscal and administrative decentralization from below. The local institutions aligned with the FMLN have attempted to combine the capacity for protest with effective and propositional local governance as a platform for acquiring the political capital necessary to derail ARENA's neoliberal reforms and win the Presidency. Lacking any control over state agencies, the NGOs, municipal governments and community organizations aligned with the FMLN have acted with considerable autonomy, if not incentives, to innovate in the implementation of local reconstruction plans, pursue independent funding and channel local demands upward.

The FMLN adapted an **empowerment through conflict** approach to the post-war opportunity of decentralization by employing a diversity of collective action strategies. In contrast to the more dire predictions that FMLN rule would be intolerant, authoritarian, secretive, or unrestrained in the violation of property rights and human rights, the predominant strategies of FMLN governance at the local level have been, in fact, quite pragmatic. FMLN councils have sought to perfect local governance through the promotion of unprecedented participatory and accountability mechanisms, advancing an agenda for far reaching political reform, and building community capacity for social oversight based on equity principles. Empowerment through conflict strategies have also placed a premium on institutional coordination, although recurrent factional divisions have been the principal obstacle to even greater electoral success.

D. NGOS: A MIXED LEGACY

Within the suggested range of competing empowerment strategies, municipal governments and NGOs have also evolved on different tracks. Communities in zones of wartime FMLN control supported NGOs and reserved hostility for many mayors. This pattern of institutional

preferences was reversed in zones of government control. NGOs allied with the FMLN have tended to prioritize contentious collective actions to demand among other fulfillments of the Peace Accords, expropriative redistribution of assets. Controlled until recently by ARENA or PCN mayors, municipalities have tended to emphasize conventional modes of participation and gradual improvements in public services. Since 1994, the ideological tension between NGOs and municipal government has diminished. FMLN mayors now govern over half of the population at the local level and must learn the art of coordinating with adversaries, including many NGOs. ARENA's initial distrust and unwillingness to deal directly with most NGOs or community organizations has switched to prioritizing and rewarding alliances with those that are willing to accept the established rules of the game. Still, coordination between government, mayors and NGOs became one of the central challenges to post-war decentralized development.

My analysis of the evolution of Salvadoran civil society over the past five decades questions whether the proliferation of NGOs has increased non-elite bargaining capacity. On one hand, the most recent cycle of organizational growth defies the logic of pluralist democratic theorists that posit the slow, non-conflictive accretion of social capital through the face to face encounters within small associations. In El Salvador, a large segment of the population organized itself as a strategy to confront a repressive state and suffered tremendous repression as a result. A solid foundation of social and political capital was generated in the increasingly violent experiences of mass collective action in which civil society organizations and local government were often at odds. The break with the traditional paternalist NGO presence that prevailed prior to the war has undoubtedly contributed to local development.

On the other hand, NGOs were never intended to assume broader development responsibilities. The value added of effective NGOs is in making modest, partial contributions to local development that demonstrate how development might be solved, and to empower local actors to act collectively to achieve these solutions. Instead, many NGOs have tended to assign themselves the full responsibility of solving local needs. In so doing, NGOs have often failed to coordinate widely enough and have diverted local energy away from addressing structural obstacles such as inequality and political capture, or to look beyond the local environment for the required investments of the private sector and the state. Despite contributing to social and economic development, NGOs have at times provided an inferior substitute for effective government services and have undermined the political capacity of gremios better suited to

advocate for those services. As some evidence here and numerous analysts have observed, large numbers of NGOs ought to indicate a most viable civil society. Yet, the NGO sector in El Salvador is fragmented, highly politicized at the margins, and in many respects given their numbers, surprisingly unable to advance a progressive social agenda.

E. MEASURING EMPOWERMENT: AGRARIAN INEQUALITY, INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE, & PARTICIPATION

An assessment of post-war agricultural development strategies in the municipal case studies provides the first direct link between post-war land inequality, decentralization and empowerment. These largely agricultural communities share a very low accumulated level of economic or human capital, although important differences are evident. First and foremost, although land inequality remains a fact of life in El Salvador, some communities are no longer paralyzed by this formidable obstacle to development. In Tecoluca, the predatory hold of the landed elite was broken, creating space for a variety of locally driven, often contentious and collective development initiatives. In turn, NGOs, local gremios and community organizations have been assigned unprecedented authority and elicit higher levels of local collaboration toward fulfilling the elevated expectations for post-war development.

In contrast, land inequality remains high in the Jiboa Valley, and to a slightly lesser extent, San Ildefonso. In the Jiboa Valley, a remarkable stability in patron-client relations underscores the individualist, acquiescent and nostalgic attitudes that continue to enable top-down initiatives to favor the prerogatives of a small group of larger owners. An empowerment through invitation strategy to rural development opens very little space for local actors or new alliances to compete with, much less confront the modernizing elites within ARENA that control the allocation of patronage and discipline dissent. In San Ildefonso, the ambivalent collaboration with both sides during the war has resulted in a partial land reform, but is weakened by the absence of a strong identity or political ally able to fend off the encroachment on local power of provincial elites.

The dividends of both empowerment strategies in terms of economic capital have been small. International loan conditionality has been instrumental in shifting agrarian reform away

from asset expropriation and redistribution, and toward the promotion and enforcement of market principles and individual property rights. As the state has withdrawn from agriculture, state sponsored social investment programs, municipal governments and internationally funded NGOs have tried to fill the gap. For the most part, none of the first generation of post-war agricultural development initiatives have succeeded in achieving sustainable livelihoods for the majority of the beneficiary populations. Most share the same defects and were never more than social compensation programs in an economic climate highly inhospitable to small scale agriculture.

Far from being monolithic, each case study illustrates different correlations of power and internal tensions between landed and modernizing elites, individual peasant farmers, organized farmer groups, NGOs, state agencies, and international financial institutions. Where there is relative continuity in land inequality and relations between the various social classes, empowerment by invitation strategies circumscribe the options for local producers and decentralization of rural development resources are more prone to political capture. Counter-insurgent empowerment strategies have also depended to a greater extent on the top-down benevolence of the state and the disciplinary capacity of hierarchical institutions such as COENA to manage an orderly retreat from economic dependence on agriculture. In these settings (Jiboa Valley), communities rely mostly on hierarchy and market collective action strategies that emphasize individual competition and tend to reward elites through the political capture of resources freed by agricultural policy reforms.

Where the power of elites, both the landowning and modernizing types, has been restricted by land redistribution, empowerment through conflict strategies have shifted agricultural development responsibilities to new local institutions and leaders. Insurgent empowerment strategies in Tecoluca have relied increasingly on contract or community collective action strategies. These strategies combine negotiated institutional solutions for exploring alternative post-war agricultural development alliances with solidarity based, frequently contentious and mobilized defense of hard won rights and assets. As a result, effective vigilance against political capture is greater.

Where political experiences were less clearly defined and agrarian inequality left partially intact (San Ildefonso), competition between top-down and bottom-up contract collective action

strategies have neutralized each other and consequently resulted in the weakest economic performance.

Perhaps the more important distinction beyond the failure to create much economic capital has been the accumulation of political capital in demonstrating a long term alternative for local economic development that rests on widespread credibility and an organizational capacity to defend it against political capture. The risks of political capture remain. Political influence in the design, approval and implementation of internationally financed investments in the strengthening of rural producers negatively affected the major agricultural initiatives in all three municipal case studies (Cooperative Nonualco and PRODAP in the Jiboa Valley, Lempa Acahuapa in San Ildefonso, and the Bajo Lempa loan in Tecoluca). Resistance to these instances of political meddling in the provision of public goods depended on transparent, accountable and equitable structures of local governance. In Tecoluca alone, where land inequality has been most clearly reversed, were these attributes visible. Even in Tecoluca these qualities were insufficient.

Post-war trends in local development finance suggest that decentralization has expanded new local opportunities for resource mobilization, but has failed to compensate for persistent biases in public investment against rural economic development. Local actors have little choice but to coordinate on various levels to find solutions to this resource mobilization challenge. Again, a comparison of institutional level empowerment, defined as the performance of local institutions in three key areas of governance: cooperation between mayors, inter-institutional coordination within municipalities, and participation, transparency and accountability in local resource mobilization, reveals striking differences in insurgent and counter-insurgent municipalities.

In each area, FMLN mayors and local institutions in Tecoluca outperform the two counter-insurgent cases in nearly every institutional empowerment indicator. Efforts by FMLN mayors to lead municipal coordination around a progressive political agenda in the San Vicente mayors' council have been repeatedly blocked by ARENA party elites. At the inter-institutional level within each municipal case, Tecoluca's municipal development council has included a wider diversity of participants, explored a more profound discussion of the structural obstacles to local development, and considered of a more ambitious menu of advocacy strategies than similar efforts in the Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso. Finally, Tecoluca's *cabildo abierto* process demonstrates a higher and more intense level of citizen participation, modestly greater

transparency and concrete strides toward the establishment of participatory budget accountability mechanisms. Together, these institutional innovations in Tecoluca have resulted in a more diverse, stable and increasing development finance base than either of the other two municipal governments.

The sum of the evidence underscores fundamental differences in the insurgent and counter-insurgent empowerment strategies. The performance of local institutions in Jiboa Valley and San Ildefonso suggest that the legacy of counter-insurgent political experiences is the persistence of hierarchy or market collective action strategies – neither of which has proven particularly effective in confronting the threat of political capture. Tecoluca, by contrast, has demonstrated the capacity for contract and community collective action strategies that are more associated with participatory and accountable local governance, and the institutional coordination so necessary for overcoming the challenges to local development in El Salvador.

For the majority of indicators the measure individual level empowerment attitudes and achievements, Tecoluca also surpasses San Ildefonso and the Jiboa Valley. Tecolucans are significantly more involved in the social and political life of their communities and the nation, demonstrating the most versatile capacity for collective action in both conventional and unconventional opportunities for participation.

However, the true test of the generalizability of Tecoluca's achievements is to compare the empowerment qualities at an individual level across a broader cross-section of El Salvador. I test the uniqueness of Tecoluca's successful insurgent empowerment strategy by comparing the effect of its core distinctive attribute – its insurgent political experience, on the individual level empowerment indicators across the entire paracentral survey sample. Empowerment is measured at the individual level by efficacious participation in post-war decentralized development (formal community activism and contentious protest). Comparisons of the levels of participation between representative insurgent and counter-insurgent communities in one of El Salvador's ex-conflictive regions based on the survey results clearly illustrate the impact of competing empowerment strategies. I find that 1) decentralization reforms are associated with the highest levels of efficacious participation and individual level empowerment achievements in general where local land inequality and associated power relations have been leveled – in insurgent FMLN communities, and 2) political experiences of bottom-up, contentious decentralization

linked with the social and economic contexts of FMLN zones of influence prove to be a durable predictor of efficacious participation across the entire region.

What makes decentralization work? For twelve years, the U.S. spent \$4.5 billion in aid and considerable political capital fighting the communist inspired insurgency *Frente para la Liberación Nacional Farabundo Martí* in El Salvador. The conventional justification behind this counter-insurgent commitment was the belief that a communist takeover in El Salvador would be bad for democracy (totalitarian rule), bad for political stability (ungovernability triggered by unleashed demand outstripping institutional capacity) and bad for economic development (rigid preference for a command economy over market reforms). A true test of this thesis is only possible under conditions of an FMLN Presidency. However, at the local level the evidence presented here provides compelling support for the core assumption that insurgent and counter-insurgent political experiences were substantively different, but refutes the expected outcome. What U.S. development and other bilateral aid representatives now concede and what FMLN political gains at the local level seem to confirm, is the puzzling evidence that FMLN postwar rule at the local level in Tecoluca and other insurgent municipalities has been pragmatic, inclusive and accountable - the very opposite effect than that predicted by their detractors.

In Tecoluca, insurgent collective action has broken the straitjacket of land inequality. In so doing, all other reinforcing processes of inequality (resource allocation, participation, accountability) have also been loosened. As a result, the likelihood of political capture has been dramatically lowered. Decentralization reinforced a process of diminishing inequality in Tecoluca that empowered local actors to acquire capital resources and use them effectively to overcome collective action problems and contest prevailing inequality. Tecoluca collects more local taxes, uses these and other resources more effectively to provide better services, and encourages more far reaching coordination to ensure the highest possible efficiency among local institutions. Compliance with these negotiated local development strategies is greatly enhanced by Tecoluca's capacity for contentious collective action.

The intervening authority of local elites combined with the stigma associated with grassroots organizing in government controlled zones, such as the Jiboa Valley, explains the persistence of high inequality. Consequently, the absence of mechanisms for participation, accountability and transparency make decentralization highly susceptible to bureaucratic resistance, corruption and the prioritization of elite interests – in other words, political capture.

By disabling local capacity to overcome collective action problems and contest prevailing inequality through either conventional or contentious means, decentralization may have even disempowered local actors in the Jiboa Valley and to a lesser extent in San Ildefonso.

F. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS DISSERTATION:

1. *New ways to measure empowerment:* The lack of attention to empowerment in the political science literature is due in part to the concept's multi-disciplinary nature. Elements that I have defined as empowerment (participation, efficacy, trust, etc.) constitute vibrant research programs within political science and the other social sciences. On the contrary, the widespread use of empowerment resources, attitudes or achievements in development literature often lacks an accepted frame of meaning or method of evaluation. Empowerment is one of the three pillars of World Bank's approach to poverty reduction, yet there is no consensus on what it is or how it can be measured. This dissertation reflects the novel efforts underway to substantiate and integrate our approach to measuring the empowerment impact of development policies or projects.

The analysis also moves beyond what empowerment is not. For example, empowerment is commonly associated with the aphorism, '*Give a man a fish and he eats for one night. Teach him how to fish and he eats for life.*' The inherent appeal of this adage is that building self-sufficiency appears to be a win-win proposition. The benefactor is pleased to see a limit on poverty assistance, and through the transfer of technical skills or resources the recipient is presumably enabled to participate in their own self-development. Post-war decentralization policies that target rural ex-conflictive populations in El Salvador have largely operated according to this conventional wisdom in El Salvador. By transferring resources, training and even responsibility from the state or international agencies to local actors, the rural poor were expected to be more able to help themselves.

This dissertation has shown how such an approach has unfortunately failed under conditions of high inequality. First, the conventional approach assumes that the transfer of technology is sufficient and avoids the creation of political and social capital resources.

Secondly, the transfer of empowerment resources to the local level does not ensure that these resources will lead to the expected outcomes. Teaching someone to fish does not insure that they will receive a fair price for their catch or that the revenue will not be expropriated through onerous taxation or theft. Nor does it guarantee their secure access to sustainably replenished fishing waters. In settings of high inequality and weak democratic institutions, resources transferred to the poor are highly susceptible to political capture and decentralization can have the perverse effect of disempowering the local beneficiary. Collective, perhaps contentious collective action is required to guarantee the conversion of these empowerment resources into achievements. The value added of the alternative approach to empowerment advanced here is to account for both empowering and disempowering potential outcomes through a more balanced range of indicators that do not disqualify political capital and political achievements nor exclude contentious forms of agency.

Attention to structural and contextual factors such as inequality in measuring empowerment moves us beyond an exclusive focus at the household or community level. Empowerment must be measured and compared simultaneously at different levels: individual, institutional and societal, with some process tracing between these levels.

This approach to empowerment also emphasizes the significance of inequality, particularly asset inequality, as a national or local contextual constraint on policy performance as an area that deserves considerably more research attention. The effects of inequality explored in this study suggest that future research on the topic strive to analyze the deeper causal effects this attribute of Latin America's political economy on the region's disappointing policy performance than the habitual compilation of descriptive statistics.

The capacity for local collective action to confront entrenched inequality represents the central challenge for making decentralization work in El Salvador. Decentralized development tends to settle for either unplanned, individualist collective action strategies or seeks out an institutional patron to push down the reform from above. This alternative approach provides for a more diverse and expansive set of potential solutions to collective action problems that includes a variety of negotiation strategies, the formation of new formal and informal organizations, self-government, strategies of community norms of fairness and reciprocity – all of which are oriented by bottom-up demand for decentralization.

This empowerment framework also departs from conventional development policy assumptions that tend to treat all rural communities as essentially the same. Overlooking or intentionally ignoring the variation in political experiences among communities that at first glance appear similar, reduces the likelihood of policy success. Determination of which of the four categories of collective action strategy may be most likely in any given community depends on an analysis of the political opportunity structure over time. Reconstruction of municipal case study histories tracing processes of agrarian inequality, access to elites and state repression was necessary to assess the probability of certain empowerment strategies in the present.

This analysis of the wartime experiences contrasts sharply with the counter-insurgent perspective of revolutionary political culture that was espoused by the government and its principal benefactor, the United States, during and after the war. The historical narrative presented here complicates the exclusively negative view of conflict as an empowerment strategy by insurgents. By employing some of the right's preferred indicators for democracy and development, this dissertation provides a wealth of evidence that challenges many of the dire predictions of insurgent rule. Conflictive empowerment strategies that emphasize zero-sum resource distribution and contentious advocacy strategies are found to be legitimate and effective in explaining post-war empowerment, complicating a singular focus on win-win strategies. Application of Lichbach's stylized rational choice framework of solutions to the rebel's dilemma to empowerment expands the range of agency options beyond positive sum scenarios.

As a pilot effort to explore a rather novel methodology, there remain many unanswered questions regarding the appropriate empowerment measure. These include a clearer conceptual distinction between resources, attitudes or achievements; a logical causal sequence between these factors, and the recognition that achievements do not fulfill Sen's preferred notion of capabilities. Further efforts to test these and alternative definitions of empowerment over time will undoubtedly shed further light on these gray areas. Other policies that rely on similar elements of empowerment, or what makes decentralization work (participation, accountability, resource mobilization, efficacy, etc.) are equally suitable domains for seeking a better understanding of why collective action matters, how it is achieved, and how inequality sets limits or facilitates finding these solutions.

2. *Measuring Agrarian Inequality*: A second methodological innovation is the use of nationwide household surveys that can be disaggregated at sub-national levels to provide data on income, asset distribution and other relevant indicators. While many countries, such as El Salvador, have not updated their agrarian census, research on the extent and impact of land inequality can be advanced by utilizing household survey data that have become widely available throughout Latin America. To suggest that land inequality no longer matters simply because of data unavailability effectively biases research results. This research demonstrates an effective solution to this methodological problem. Seligson (1995) illustrates the utility of these household data sets in filling empirical gaps left by infrequent agricultural or population censuses. My analysis of El Salvador national household survey data permits an important update and extension of what we know about the current agrarian structure in El Salvador. Harmonization of household survey instruments and improved survey techniques to include large landowners would provide a critical source of data and facilitate long overdue cross-national comparison of land inequality in Latin America that employs current and disaggregated inequality estimates.

3. *Regional analysis of national conflicts*: El Salvador is not one case of peasant insurgency, but a number of different regional cases. This analysis of Salvadoran civil war in the paracentral region over several decades adds a chapter to the growing comparative regional and temporal treatment of this conflict and is consistent with a more disaggregated and local approach to studying civil war (Lauria-Santiago and Binford (2004). In another sense, the comparison strives to compare insurgency and counter-insurgency simultaneously, which I hope has strengthened rather than weakened the analysis. The surprising contrasts in the political experiences of neighboring Salvadoran communities of the same geographical region provides texture to the claims of polarization that are used to describe the country, but are rarely explored in depth.

The analysis of the Salvadoran civil war also departs somewhat from the view held by some that the nature of experiences of FMLN combatants were overwhelmingly authoritarian and non-democratic. While this was undoubtedly true in particular instances, the relatively little evidence that we have about the diversity of self-governing experiences under FMLN rule in conflictive zones tells a slightly different story. The insurgent collective action strategy during the war was much more dependent upon the voluntarism of its supporters and combatants than the coercion to which such collaboration is often attributed. The post-war experience of FMLN

rule, which has tended to be surprisingly innovative and democratic at the local level while regressing at times toward a central command mode of decision making at the national level, cannot be explained without recognition of accumulated capacity for democratic self-rule during the war.

4. Local context effects: Comparison of statistical averages at the national level or the observed actions of individuals at the micro-level takes us only so far establishing meaningful explanations of revolution, democracy, or inequality. The contextual effect of shared experiences or attributes of an intermediate unit of analysis, be it a community or an organizational network, offers independent explanatory power that is not reducible to the attributes of any individual and is obscured by a higher statistical aggregations. The variation in the contextual effect of political experiences found between otherwise similar rural communities, despite noted shortcomings in its definition, is significant for understanding post-war empowerment at several levels. Control for local contextual explanatory factors has broad applications to empowerment research and other development puzzles of comparative research.

Combined, the evidence and analysis presented here strongly suggests that the impact of civil war on Salvadoran political culture in one region, while not uniform, has generated empowerment where conventional wisdom has suggested we might least expect it. It is very much a story that shows the potency of revolutionary action in achieving local empowerment by transforming property relations and yet also turns out to be tragically inadequate. Only by fighting, these three contrasting regional cases suggest, could the Salvadorans gain much, and they did gain much. Despite these considerable advances, it still wasn't enough. Even extensive agrarian change and the accumulation of impressive political capital in places like Tecoluca, which approximated the kind of redistribution that most revolutionaries imagined they were fighting for, has proven inadequate to ensure sustainable rural livelihoods for much of the rural population.

In the future, we might return to the lower Lempa valley and find a burgeoning cottage export industry that Putnam traced in Northern Italy. For now, Tecoluca teaches us once again that the winners in class struggle that are at the forefront of advancing human freedom and democracy, are also often on the losing end in the struggle against economic marginalization.

The largely peasant fighters in the Salvadoran insurgency have altered the political culture and many are satisfied that access to land and local power will offer a better life for their children, if only in places like Tecoluca. However, most of the country's impoverished agricultural labor force is watching the tide of history roll over them as trade liberalization will likely bring an unceremonious end to many subsistence livelihoods. The winners of this story, as Barrington Moore predicted four decades ago, are the modernizing agrarian elites that have appropriated the crown jewels of economic opportunity that were opened by the transition to democracy. This sobering reality, more than any single indicator that I have measured, perhaps best underscores the limits set by high inequality to empowerment in post-war El Salvador.

APPENDIX A. Empowerment Indicators, Measures and Data Sources

Table A.1 Individual-Community Level Data Sources

RESOURCES	Individual-Community Level Data Sources (1998 Paracentral Survey, n=912 unless noted otherwise)
Economic Capital	
1. Income	Reported monthly income range, P1.37
2. Land (n=435)	Reported land owned or rented, ha. (P1.11, P1.17)
3. Land inequality	Gini index of land inequality among producers w access to land
4. Collective land ownership	% of landowners holding some or all land in collective title
5. Livestock (n=132)	Reported cattle owned of 467 ag. Producers
6. Remittances (Exit option)	Reported receipt of remittances (range) in last year (P1.40)
7. Dependency Index	Total household occupations per family member
8. Household Asset Index	Index of 5 household assets: tv,vcr,fridge,phone,auto (Sum P1.45-P1.49).
9. (n=912)	Weighted Scale 0-10
10. Farm HH Asset Index (n=436)	Index of 6 farm assets:tractor,plow,silo,car,ox team, grain mill (Sum P1.50-P1.55) Wtd Scale 0-10
Human Capital	
1. Education level	Reported years of education achieved
2. Education example	Maximum level of educational achievement within household
3. Civic Knowledge	Knowledge of mayor, council rep, & legislator (Sum P3.1, P3.2, P3.3, P4.1, P5.1) Scale 0-10
Social Capital	
1. Social Ties (SOCTIE)	Reported trust in neighbors to help resolve household challenges/problems (Mean P10.1-P10.5) Scale 0-10
2. Association Density	Ave. number of organizational memberships (Sum P6.11-P6.17) Scale 0-7
3. Exit options	Distance to nearest paved road (km)
4. Exit options	Distance to nearest market (km)
Political Capital	
1. Access to Local Govt	Reported contact of mayor or town council P3.6
2. Access to Natl Govt	Reported contact of government official P4.2
3. Access to NGO	Reported contact of NGO P5.3
4. Collective Efficacy1	Level of confidence that neighbors could be counted on to solve a serious problem that confronted the community (excessive energy price increases, contamination by local business) (Percent saying much
5. Collective Efficacy2-	Willingness to participate in a protest against a government announced project that would harm the community (Percent saying very willing)
6. Collective Efficacy3- Development with Equity	Level of agreement with proposition that short-term inequality is necessary if economic conditions are to improve (Percent opposed)

Table A.2 Indicators and Data Sources for Empowerment/Disempowerment Mediating Attitudes

MEDIATING ATTITUDES	Individual-Community Level Data Sources (1998 Paracentral Survey, n=912 unless noted otherwise)
1. Inter-Personal Trust	Reported trust based on 3 question scale, (Mean P9.1, P9.2, P9.3) Scale 0-10
2. Life Satisfaction	Reported index of satisfaction (job, income, house, health care) (Mean p1.55, p1.56, p1.57, p1.59) Scale 0-10
3. Optimism	Economic Expectations (P1.41) Scale 0-3
4. Development Aspirations	What life improvements are achievable in future (P18.2) Scale 0-10
5. Subjective Self-Confidence	Reported confidence that one can make a difference (P6.3) Scale 0-10
6. Political Efficacy	Reported efficacy of voting participation (Mean P12.1-P12.4) Scale 0-10
7. System Support	Index of reported confidence in 10 institutions (Mean P14.1-P14.11) Scale 0-10
8. Preferences for social change	Percent reporting preference for radical or revolutionary social change (over gradual reforms and defense against revolutionary movements).
9. Religious non-fatalism	Mean opposition to the proposition that national problems can be resolved by only becoming closer to God, P16.4

Table A.3 Indicators and Data Sources for Empowerment/Disempowerment Achievements

ACHIEVEMENTS	Data Source
Individual-Community Level	
Meeting Basic Needs	
1. Access to water	Reported access (P1.42)
2. Access to electricity	Reported access (P1.43)
3. Access to adequate housing	Reported access (P1.44)
4. Access to health care	Reported very satisfied (P1.58)
5. Project beneficiary	% reporting having benefited from or participated in a community project (P8.1)
Social & Political Action	
1. Voice in community decisions	Who makes local decisions (Scale 0-10) Max is most participatory (LOCDEC)
2. Satisfaction w local decision making	Assessment of community decision making (P6.2) Scale 0-6, Max strongest approval
3. Local Demand Effectiveness (n=243)	Percent that reported requests to municipal government were met
4. Government Demand Effectiveness (n=209)	Percent that reported requests to municipal government were met
5. NGO Demand Effectiveness (n=149)	Percent that reported requests to municipal government were met
6. Efficacious participation 1	Formal organizational participation Index, PP1:relig, school, ADESCOs, union, coop, other (Mean P6.11-P6.16) Scale 0-10
7. Efficacious participation 2	Informal community participation index, PP2 (Mean P6.4 – P6.6) Scale 0-10)
8. Efficacious participation 3	Project participation index, PP3:labor, materials, design, choose contractor, control budget, evaluate, direct, other (Mean P8.4-P8.11) Scale 0-10)
9. Women's organizational participation	Percent of women who report some or frequent participation in a local women's organization, P6.18
10. Women's influence	Percent of women who report that women have more influence now than before the war
11. Participation in cabildo abierto	Percent that reported participation in cabildo abierto or municipal assembly in past six months
12. Protesting	Percent that reported participation in recent protest activity
13. Voting/abstention	Percent that reported voting in most recent election
Local Problem Solving & Advocacy	
1. Problem solving skills	Analysis of top local problem (P7.1-P7.4) Likert Scale of Problem Identification, analysis, and Solution (0-9)
2. Collective Advocacy	Percent reporting communal, collective problem solving methods (P7.4)
Ag Resource Mobilization	
1. Improve local outcomes (N=467)	Reported increase in agricultural production over prior year
2. Improve local outcomes (N=467)	Reported improvement in agricultural income
3. Agriculture diversification (N=467)	Reported level of diversification (P1.18)
4. Agriculture intensification (N=467))	Index of reported access to four agricultural technology indicators (Sum P1.22a, P1.23a, P1.18a, P1.25a) Wtd Scale 0-10.
5. Land cultivated	% of land cultivated
6. Land security	% of landowners with title to 50% or more of land
7. Access to credit (n=279)	Reported loan in the past year (P1.29)

Table A.4 Indicators and Data Sources for Institutional Level Empowerment/Disempowerment Achievements

Meso/Inter-Institutional Level	Data Source
1. Local Government Performance	Index of three performance assessment questions (below) [0-10]
2. Performance Local Govt	Percent reporting that they were treated well or very well in dealing with LG P3.10
3. Performance Local Govt	Percent reporting that municipal services are good or excellent P3.11
4. Representation Local Govt	Percent that say mayor is somewhat or very interested in local participation to resolve community problems, P3.12
5. Performance Local Govt	Percent that report willingness to pay more local taxes in order to improve local services P3.15
6. Representation Local Govt	Percent that say LG responds to local needs always or most of the time P3.16
7. Representation Local Govt (n=367)	Percent that say all sectors are represented in the cabildo abiertos most of the time P3.6
8. National Govt. Performance	Index of three performance assessment questions (below) [0-10]
9. Performance National Govt	Percent reporting that they were treated well or very well in dealing with agency of National Government P4.6
10. Performance National Govt	Percent reporting that municipal services are good or excellent P4.7
11. Representation National Govt	Percent that say government is somewhat or very interested in local participation to resolve community problems, P4.8
12. Representation National Govt	Percent that principal beneficiaries of government programs are the poor or everyone p4.9 (rather than the rich or government functionaries)
13. NGO Performance Index	Index of three performance assessment questions (below) [0-10]
14. Performance NGO	Percent reporting that they were treated well or very well in dealing with NGO P5.7
15. Performance NGO	Percent reporting that NGO services are good or excellent P5.8
16. Representation NGO	Percent that say NGO is somewhat or very interested in local participation to resolve community problems, P5.9
17. Representation NGO	Percent that say principal beneficiaries of NGO assistance are the poor or everyone P5.10
18. Resource Mobilization 1	Local tax effort (Minimum percent exceeded expected tax collection performance based on Gallagher model (2000).
19. Resource Mobilization 2	Local tax per capital
20. Resource Mobilization 3	Diversity of Municipal Finance (% of total development resources represented by state transfers
21. Accountability	Qualitative (Low, Low-Moderate, Moderate, Moderate-High, High) based on participatory observation of municipal meetings
22. Transparency	Qualitative- Access to Available documentation
23. Coordination	Qualitative: based on participatory observation in inter-municipal, inter-institutional and town level meetings.

APPENDIX B. Paracentral Sample Design Methodology & Survey Descriptives

Table B.1 Sample Design

1. Oversample Design: 429 surveys			
Municipality:	Population (est. 1998)	Pop. Percent Oversample	Surveys (% Oversample)
Tecoluca	26,000	52%	155 (36%)
San Ildefonso	11,000	22%	119 (28%)
Valle de Jiboa	23,000	46%	155 (36%)
OVERSAMPLE	60,000	100%	429
TOTAL			
2. Secondary Sample Design: (482 encuestas)			
The Population STRATA A: San Salvador Metropolitan Area (SSMA) and Municipalities > 80,000 people were excluded from the survey.			
	National Population	Paracentral Population	Total Surveys
STRATA B: 40-80,000 (ALL NC)			
EXC	149,747 (18.8%)	62,697	0
NC	644,928	103,126	166 (18%)
SUBTOTAL	794,675 (25%)	165,823 (34.4%)	166 (18%)
STRATA C: 20-40,000			
EXC	295,734 (9.3%)	91,619 (19%)	134 (14.7%)
NC	523,459 (16.5%)	0	0
SUBTOTAL	819,193 (25.7%)	91,619 (19%)	134 (32%)
STRATA D: 0-20,000			
EXC	725,435 (22.8%)	181,406 (46.5%)	506 (55.6%)
NC	842,137 (26.5%)	42,762 (37.7%)	106 (37.7%)
SUBTOTAL	1,561,572 (49.3%)	224,406 (50%)	612 (67.1%)
TOTAL SAMPLE	3,181,440 (100.0%)	481,610 (100%)	912

The sampling methodology is a stratified survey design with clustered oversamples. Two of the Jiboa Valley municipalities (San Cayetano and Nuevo Tepetitán) were not defined as Ex-conflictive municipalities by the National Reconstruction Program. I am grouping them with Verapáz and Guadalupe (which were designated as ex-

conflictive municipalities). Sample design excluded the largest 4 municipalities in the country and the other 10 that comprise the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador (STRATA A), using the remaining 251 municipalities as a guide for determining the number of interviews selected per municipality so the survey sample is consistent with national population distribution according to most recent 1992 census. The remaining national population at the municipal level is clustered into three strata, as noted above. In STRATA B, 25% of the national population, and 34% of the regional population lives in municipalities containing between 40-80,000 people. This is proportional to 25% (or 228) of my 912 interviews conducted in municipalities of this size. However, in order to include enough farmers as a sub-sample in the non-case study municipalities, I decided to limit the urban part of the survey to only two municipalities of this size (San Vicente and Zacatecoluca) conducting 83 interviews in each. In STRATA C & D, I also selected secondary municipalities so that they reflect the national distribution within ex-conflictive/non-conflictive communities. For the paracentral region, the non-conflictive municipalities represent 25% of the total regional population. The total number of surveys drawn from non-conflictive municipalities was 272, which represents 30 % of the total. For both the oversample and secondary sample components, respondents were selected by choosing cantones (communities within a municipality) at random, but controlling for the urban/rural, gender and age distribution of the respondents through quota criteria.

Table B.2 Paracentral Municipalities Surveyed

<i>Paracentral Region Survey Sample Design</i>	<i>Pop. 1992</i>	<i>EXC/ NC</i>	<i>Local Party</i>	<i>Surveys</i>
STRATA B 40-80000				
San Vicente	45,824	NC	ARENA	83
Zacatecoluca	57,032	NC	FMLN	83
STRATA B Subtotal	102,856			166
STRATA C 20-40,000				
Jiquilisco	37,334	EXC	FMLN	46
Berlin	21,947	EXC	PCN	44
Santiago Nonualco	32,338	EXC	ARENA	44
STRATA C Subtotal	91,619			
STRATA D 0-20,000				
Tecoluca, S.V.	14,865	EXC	FMLN	155
Apastepeque, S.V.	16,832	EXC	FMLN	32
San Sebastian, S.V.	12,662	EXC	FMLN	30

San Ildefonso, S.V.	7,904	EXC	ARENA	119
Guadalupe, S.V.	5,103	EXC	ARENA	39
Verapaz, S.V.	5,699	EXC	PDC	40
Nva. Tepetitán, S.V.	3,566	NC	FMLN	38
San Cayetano, S.V.	4,473	NC	ARENA	38
Jucuapa, Usu.	14,887	EXC	ARENA	31
Nueva Grenada, Usu.	7,289	EXC	ARENA	30
Ozatlan, Usu.	10,972	NC	ARENA	30
San Pedro Nonualco, La Paz	9,923	EXC	ARENA	30
STRATA D Subtotal	114,175			
Total Sample Population	308,650			912
Total Paracentral Population	481,610			

Table B.3 Political Experiences By Case Study Municipality

	Jiboa Valley	Tecoluca	San Ildefonso	Secondary Municipalities	Total
FMLN control	0 0	66 42.6%	0	64 13.3%	130 14.3%
FMLN expansion zone	0	23 14.8%	48 40.3%	43 8.9%	114 12.5%
GOES expansion zone	8 5.2%	66 42.6%	15 12.6%	183 37.9%	272 29.8%
GOES control	147 94.8%	0	56 47.1%	193 40.0%	396 43.4%
Total	155 100%	155 100%	119 100%	483 100%	912 100%

Table B.4 Comparison of Survey Descriptives¹⁰³⁰

		1998	1991	1995	1999	Actual El Salvador 1992 Census	Actual Rural El Salvador
Sample (all cases betw 18-95 yrs)	Descriptives	Regional	Urban San Salvador	National	National		
Strata	M.S.S.	0	100	34.9	25.1	27	0
	> 80,000	0	0	4.5	5.5	11	0
	40-79,999	18%	0	15.1	20.6	15.5	25
	20-39,999	31.8%	0	14.6	14.0	16	25
	<20,000	50.2%	0	30.8	34.9	31	50
		912	910	1409	2914	5,118,599	3,181,440
Sex	Male	51.2	44.5	44.7	48.2	48.6	49.9
	Female	48.4	55.5	55.3	51.5	51.4	50.1
Age	18-20	4.6	21.1	10.5	12.4	11.9	12.7
	21-30	22.7	40.1	29.7	28.5	31.1	30.1
	31-40	23.5	18.5	22.1	23.0	20.4	20
	41-50	19.8	10.2	16.3	13.7	14.2	14.6
	51-95	29.4	10.1	21.4	22.4	22.3	22.6
Education	None	21.3	0	19.1	12.9		
	Primary	50.9	18.3	42.9	29.5		
	Secondary	23.1	52.2	28.3	39.2		
	University	4.7	29.5	9.7	18.4		
Religion	Catholic	82.6	71	67.8	57.5		
	Protestant	11.4	10.8	17.7	24.2		
	Other	6.0	18.3	14.4	18.3		
Urban/Rural		33/67					
Income (%)	< \$80	30.5		37.2	32.3		
	80-130	30		22.6	27.7		
	130-230	21.1		23.4	14.8		
	230-450	15.0		14.3	13.6		
	> \$450	3.4		2.5	12.5		
Access to Land	% surveyed	47.8		5.4	7.7		
Farm Occup	% surveyed	39		9.7	8.9	21(>18 yrs)	47(>18 yrs)
Ex-Conflictive Zone	Surveyed	70	0	38	24		
	vs. Actual	53	25	25	25	25	50
Ex-combatants	% surveyed	7.2	N/A	N/A	5.8	4.5	7.0
Political Orientation	Left (1-4)		10.5	14.1	18.7		
	Middle (5-7)		71.5	67.4	53.5		
	Right (8-10)		18	18.4	27.7		
FMLN Vote 1997	% surveyed	17.4			13.0		
1999 President	% surveyed	14.8		6.0	11.1		

¹⁰³⁰ Source: DIGESTYC (1997, 1992) Ex-combatant proportions of overall proportions are based on U.N. estimates of demobilized combatant populations, plus former combatants, plus active but not formerly demobilized FMLN combatants. Totals of 25,000 FMLN, and 100,000 FAES were then divided by the total and rural over-17 year old population from 1992. The Peace Accords officially identified 115 municipalities as ex-conflictive zones targeted for reconstruction, equal to a population of 1,271,599, or 25% of total 1992 population, and 50% of rural population.

Abstention	% surveyed	30.8		35.1	52.9		
Vote is Secret	% surveyed	37.9		17.3	8.2		
FMLN governed municipalities	% surveyed	25	0		57		
	% actual	42	0	1.8	54		

APPENDIX C. Survey Instrument, Survey Codes and List of Institutional Interviews

Survey

ENCUESTA DE OPINIONES, ACTITUDES Y ACCIONES. SAN VICENTE, EL SALVADOR 1998						
Derechos Reservados The University of Pittsburgh. This questionnaire is proprietary and the use of any of its content without permission is a violation of copyright laws.						
Versión 10: Revised Sep 4. 1998 (190 q/18a)						
Municipio	Cantón	Caserío	Fecha	Hora	Encuestador	Ficha No.
1. Urb 2. Rural	Aleña de calle principal 1- Si 2- No	1. Originario 2. Desplazado 3. Repoblado	1. Ex-conflictive 2. Non-conflictive			

[IDENTIFIQUESE CON EL ENTREVISTADO]

- Buenas días/tardes Sr.(a). Mi nombre es _____ y estoy haciendo una encuesta sobre el desarrollo de esta comunidad para la Universidad de Pittsburgh en los Estados Unidos. Lo que opina es sumamente importante a mí, y quisiera pedirle que colabore en este estudio, dedicándome un poco de tiempo para esta encuesta. Todas sus respuestas son confidenciales. No voy a preguntarle su nombre.
- Voy a leerle un grupo de preguntas tal como están escritas de tal modo que todos los que respondan en esta encuesta contestarán las mismas preguntas. En algunos casos le pediré que conteste con sus propias palabras. Para esas preguntas tendré que escribir las respuestas suyas, palabra por palabra. En otros casos, le daré una lista de respuestas y le pediré que U escoga la mas adecuada. Durante la entrevista, si tiene preguntas o dudas o no entiende, por favor pídale que le explique.

1.0 [PERFIL FAMILIAR Y ECONOMÍA DEL HOGAR DEL ENTREVISTADO]

Para empezar, por cada miembro de su familia, dígame la edad, el ultimo grado estudiado, si viven en su casa o afuera, y sus oficios/trabajos principales y secundarios.

1.1 [COMPOSICION FAMILIAR: ANOTE LAS SIGUIENTES POR CADA MIEMBRO DE LA FAMILIA]						
Miembro [SIN NOMBRES]	Edad	Ultimo Grado estudiado	Vive en Casa - Afuera	Ocupacion Principal	Otro Ocupacion	Codigo de oficios
Sexo de entrevistado 1. mujer 2. hombre	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.4	10. Profesional, 11. Administrador, funcionario público 12. Técnico, coordinador (ONG) 13. PNC
2.esposa (o), compa. (o)						20. Obrero(a) asalariados 21. Obreros de servicios públicos 22. Obrero de construcción (albañil, carpintero, mecánico) 23. Obreros de fabrica(maquilla) 24. Domestica
3.hijos mayores						30. Agricultor/Agropecuaria 31. Jornalero (trabajador de finca, sin tierra) 32. Arrendatario - alquila tierra rural (>= 0.5 mz) 33. Dueño de finca (o trabaja en finca familiar) 34. Mandador, caporal de hacienda, finca 35. Ganadero 36. Pescador, etc
4.						40. Comerciante 41. Gerente de micro-empresa (tienda, restaurante) 42. Vendedor ambulante 43. Transportista
5. hijos menor de 15						50. General 51. Estudiante 52. Ama de casa 53. Jubilado
6.hijas mayores						60. Otro 68. NS/NR/No aplica
7.						
8. hijas menor de 15						
9.madre (si en casa)						
10.padre (si en casa)						
1.5 Total familia:	1.6 Max edad	1.7 Max Estudiad	1.8 Total en casa	1.9 Total Ocupaciones en Casa		

- 1.10 ¿Cuál es su estado civil? **(NO LEER ALTERNATIVAS)**
 1. Soltero 2. Casado 3. Unión libre (acompañado) 4. Divorciado 5. Separado
 6. Marido trabaja fuera de la comunidad 7. Marido trabaja fuera del país 8. Viudo 9. NS/NR

[PARA RESPONDIENTES CUYO OCUPACION PRINCIPAL O SECUNDARIO ES AGRICULTOR SIGUE ABAJO, SI NO PASE A 1.29:]

- 1.11 **[SÓLO PARA DUEÑOS DE FINCA]** Cuántas manzanas mide en total la tierra de que Ud. es dueño?
[ANOTE FRACCIONES: 1/4 = .25; 1/3 = .33; 1/2 = .50; ETC.] _____ manzanas 999. NA

- 1.12 Tiene esta tierra en colectivo (proindiviso) o en parcela individual? 1. Indiv. 2. Collec. 3. Ambos 8. NS/NR 9. NA

- 1.13 ¿Cuánto de esta tierra tiene con título? _____ mz. 8. NS/NR 9. NA

- 1.14 ¿Cuántas mozos paga Ud.? 1. _____ 2. Ningun **[PASE A 1.16]** 8. NS/NR 9. NA

- 1.15 ¿Por cuánto tiempo paga Ud. los mozos?
 1. siempre 2. a menudo 3. para cosechar/moler 4. en caso de emergencia 5. nunca 8. NS/NR 9. NA

- 1.16 ¿Cuántas manzanas de su tierra esta alquilado _____ mz. 8. NS/NR 9. NA

- 1.17 **[SOLO PARA ARRENDATARIOS]** Cuántas manzanas mide en total la tierra que Ud. alquila? _____ mz. 99. NA

Ahora vamos a hablar de su producción agropecuaria de los dos últimos años. Puede decirme cuáles cultivos sembró Ud. el año pasado y antepasado, y el superficie, rendimiento, proporción de consumo, proporción de venta y precio de venta para cada cultivo. **[LEA LOS CATEGORIAS PARA CADA CULTIVO QUE SE MENCIONE EL ENTREVISTADO]**

CULTIVO	MZ. Sembrada INVIERNO Postrera Primera	MZSemb. VERANO	PROD. 97 TOTAL en QQ o unidad	PROD. 96 TOTAL en QQ o unidad	CONSUMO DOMESTICO QQ o unidad '97	CONSUMO VENTA QQ o unidad '97	PRECIO por QQ en que se lo vendió	IN- GRESO AGRIC. 1997
Maíz								
Frijol								
Maicillo								
Arroz								
Ajonjolí								
Marañón								
Caña								
Café								
Hortaliza:								
Frutales:								
Otros:								
1.18 Mezcla de cultivos: Diversificación 1. Solo granos básicos 2. Solo hortalizas y/o frutales 3. Solo cultivos de export. 4. Granos básicos y hortalizas 5. Cultivos de export y granos básico 6. Cultivos de export y frutales/hort. 7. 1 & 2 & 3 8. Otro _____ 9. NA	1.19 Max terreno sembrado 999. NA	1.20 Cambio en Prod. 1. Suba 2. Bajó 3. Ningun 8. NS/NR 9. NA	1.21 Total Ingreso Agrícola Neta: 8. NS/NR 9. NA					

1.22 Ud. ha experimentado con abono organico o medidas de conservacion?
1. Si ha implementado 2. Sabe, pero no ha implementado 3. No sabe de ellos 8. NS/NR 9. NA

1.23 Su tierra tiene acceso a riego 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

1.24 Cómo se vende su productos? 1. propios medios 2. Comerciante 3. Cooperativa 4. No se vende
8. NS/NR 9. NA

1.25 Quien le da asistencia tecnica? 1. Ninguno 2. CENTA 3. PRODAP 4. ONG _____
5. Otro: _____ 8. NS/NR 9. NA

1.26 Porque no ha sembrado otros cultivos (diversificado)?

1.27 **[PARA GANADEROS]** Cuántos ganado tiene Ud.? _____ Total ganado 8. NS/NR 9. NA

1.28 **[PARA GANADEROS]** Cuántos ganados vendio en 1997? _____? 8. NS/NR 9. NA

1.29 **[PARA TODOS]** Obtuvo Ud. [o el jefe de familia] crédito para su producción agropecuaria o para su micro-empresa en el año pasado
1. Si **[ANOTE LOS DATOS ABAJO]** 2. No **[PASE A 1.37]**

1.30 Quién se lo otorgó? 1. BFA/banco 5. Coop 2. PRODAP 6. Recibiero 3. Casa de crédito 7. ONG 4. OEF 8. NS/NR 9. NA	1.31 Cuánto le prestaron	1.32 A qué tasade interés	1.33 Ya paga o lo pagó 1. Si 2. No 3. Parcial	1.34 Si no lo pagó, qué?	1.35 Para qué utilizó el crédito? 1. agropecuario 2. microempresa 3. repar casa, salud, persona 4. otro
1.30	1.31	1.32	1.33	1.34	1.35

1.36 Hasta que punto se encuentra satisfecho con los plazos de crédito que recibió?
1. Muy satisfecho 2. Algo satisfecho 3. Algo insatisfecho 4. Muy insatisfecho 8. NS/NR 9. NA

1.37 Puede decirme entre cuáles de los siguientes cantidades se encuentran sus ingresos familiares mensuales?
[LEA LA LISTA DE RANGOS]

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Menos de 700 colones | 4. 2000 - 3000 colones |
| 2. Entre 700- 1150 colones (min.) | 5. 3000 - 4000 colones |
| 3. 1150 - 2000 colones | 6. Mas de 4001 colones |
| | 8. NS/NR |

1.38 Recuerda Ud. si sus ingresos familiares fueron más, menos o iguales que los ingresos promedios del año pasado?
1. más 2. igual 3. menos 8. NS/NR

1.39 Recibe su familia remesas de algun pariente que vive fuera del país? 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR

1.40 **[SI LA RESPUESTA ES AFIRMATIVA, PREGUNTE:]** Podría decirme mas o menos que cantidad mensual recibe

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Menos de 1000 colones | 4. 3000 - 4000 colones |
| 2. Entre 100- 2000 colones | 5. Mas de 4001 colones |
| 3. 2000 - 3000 colones | 8. NS/NR 9. NA |

1.41 Con respecto a su condicion económica ahora cómo cree Ud. van a ser las cosas el próximo año para su familia?
Diría Ud. que su situación estará mejor, igual o peor que ahora?
1. Mejor 2. Igual 3. Peor 8. NS

[OBSERVE E ANOTE LOS SIGUIENTES, SONDEE CON EL ENTREVISTADO:]

1.42 Agua	1. Río	2. Pozo público	3. Pozo/chorro privado	1.42
1.43 Luz	1. No	2. Si		1.43
1.44 Casa	1. Bahareque	2. Adobe	3. Bloque	1.44
1.45 Televisores (a colores/B/N)	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.45
1.46 Grabadora de Video	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.46
1.47 Refrigeradora	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.47
1.48 Teléfono	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.48
1.49 Automóvil o camion	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.49
1.50 Tractor	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.50
1.51 Arado	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.51
1.52 Silo	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.52
1.53 Carreta	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.53
1.54 Yunta de bueyes	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.54
1.54a Molienda	1. No	2. Si	3. Más que uno	1.54a

1.55 Que tan satisfecho está con la casa en que Ud. vive? Diría Ud. que está muy satisfecho, algo satisfecho, algo insatisfecho, o muy insatisfecho?
1. Muy satisfecho 2. Algo satisfecho 3. Algo insatisfecho 4. Muy insatisfecho 8. NS

1.56 Que tan satisfecho está con el ingreso familiar? Diría Ud. que está muy satisfecho, algo satisfecho, algo insatisfecho, o muy insatisfecho?
1. Muy satisfecho 2. Algo satisfecho 3. Algo insatisfecho 4. Muy insatisfecho 8. NS

1.57 Que tan satisfecho está con su ocupación? Diría Ud. que está muy satisfecho, algo satisfecho, algo insatisfecho, o muy insatisfecho?
1. Muy satisfecho 2. Algo satisfecho 3. Algo insatisfecho 4. Muy insatisfecho 5. No tiene 8. NS

1.58 La última vez que Ud. o algún miembro de su familia necesitó asistencia médica, a donde acudió?
[LEER ALTERNATIVAS]
1. a una clínica privado 2. a una clínica/unidad del Ministerio de Salud 3. Hospital
4. algún promotor de salud 5. Otro: 8. NS/NR (o no usa servicio médico)

1.59 Que tan satisfecho está con ese servicio médico? Diría Ud. que está muy satisfecho, algo satisfecho, algo insatisfecho, o muy insatisfecho?
1. Muy satisfecho 2. Algo satisfecho 3. Algo insatisfecho 4. Muy insatisfecho 8. NS

2.0 [LA VIDA ANTES DE LA GUERRA]

2.1 Hablemos ahora de su vida antes de estallar de la guerra. Quisiera que Ud. me dijera donde vivió su familia durante ese tiempo? Vivió aca en San Vicente, o en otra parte del país?
[PREGUNTE POR EL NOMBRE DEL CANTÓN Y DEPARTAMENTO _____]
[ANOTE LA RESPUESTA] _____
1. Si es originario 2. Otro cantón de mun 3. Otro muni de depto. 4. Otro depto. 8. NS/NR

2.2 Durante esa época [LEA UNO U OTRO DEBAJO] poseían tierra su familia?
1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. No aplica

2.3 Durante esa época, alquilaban tierra su familia? 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. No aplica

2.4 Que cantidad de tierra poseían o alquilaban Uds.? _____ 998. NS/NR 999. NA

2.5 En qué trabajaba el jefe de casa en esa época? _____ [USAR CODIGOS DE PRIMER PAGINA]
[ANOTE SI FUE Madre/Padre]

2.6 Durante esa época, antes de la guerra, alguno de su familia iba a trabajar en las cosechas de las haciendas?
1. Si 2. No [PASE A 2.9] 8. NS/NR

2.7 **[EN CASO AFIRMATIVO]** A que lugar(es) iba a trabajar _____ 8. NS/NR
9. NA

2.8 Que cultivaban o cosechaban en ese lugar(es)?
1. Cafe 2. Caña de azucar 3. Algodon 4. Granos Basicos 5. Varios 8. NS/NR 9. NA

2.9 Podría decirme Ud. si existían grupos comunales, gremiales, religiosos o vecinales, en su comunidad antes de la guerra? **[ANOTE TODOS QUE APLIQUEN, SUMA EL TOTAL EN EL CUADRO]**
1. Religiosos 2. Cooperativas 3. Vecinales/Padres de familia 4. Clubes de deportes 5. Otro _____ 8. NS/NR

2.10 Dónde pasó Ud. la guerra? _____ 1. Originario **[PASE A 2.12]** 2. Otro canton de muni.
3. Otro muni de depto 4. Otro depto. 5. Otro país 6. Combatiente 8. NS/NR

2.11 Cuándo llegó a esta comunidad? _____ 8. NS/NR 9. NA

2.12 Antes de la guerra, la vida en su comunidad era mejor o peor que ahora? Como Así?
[ANOTE LA RESPUESTA, MEJOR O PEOR, SONDEE PARA LO ECONOMICO, SOCIAL, POLITICO?]

3.0 [MODALIDADES DE PARTICIPACIÓN COMUNAL- PARTICIPACIÓN MUNICIPAL]

Ahora vamos a hablar de la alcaldía de este municipio.

3.1 Ud. sabe el nombre del alcalde(esa)? _____ 1. Sabe 2. NS. 8. NR

3.2 Ud. sabe a que partido pertenece el alcalde(esa)? _____ 1. Sabe 2. NS. 8. NR

3.3 Ud. puede nombrar su representante en el consejo municipal? _____ 1. Si 2. No 8. NR

3.4 Ha asistido Ud. un cabildo abierto u otra asamblea llamado por el alcaldía en los ultimos 6 meses? _____ 1. Si 2. No 8. NR

3.5 Hasta qué punto están representados todos los sectores de la comunidad en estas reuniones?
Diría Ud. que es mucho, algo o poco? _____ 1. Mucho 2. Algo 3. Poco 8. NS 9. NA

3.6 Ud. alguna vez le ha pedido ayuda o cooperación al Alcalde _____ 1. Sí 2. No **[PASE a 3.11]** 8. NS/NR

3.7 **[EN CASO AFIRMATIVO]** Que pidió? _____ 8. NS/NR 9. NA

3.8 Que pasó, recibió lo que pidió? 1. Sí **[PASE A 3.10]** 2. No. 8. NS/NR 9. NA

3.9 **[EN CASO NEGATIVO]** Porque piensa que no recibió lo que pidió? **[ANOTE LA RESPUESTA]** 8. NS/NR
9. NA

3.10 En general, cómo considera que le han tratado cuando ha tenido que ir a una oficina del **municipio**?
Le han tratado muy bien, bien, regular, mal o muy mal?
1. Muy bien 2. bien 3. regular 4. mal 5. pésimo 8. NS/NR 9. No trataron con el municipio

3.11 Diría Ud. que los servicios que la Alcaldía está dando a la gente son excelentes, buenos, regulares, malos o pésimos?
1. excelente 2. bueno 3. regular 4. malo 5. pésimo 8. NS

3.12 Hasta que punto diría Ud. que el alcalde está interesado en la participación de la gente para resolver los problemas de la comunidad? Diría que es mucho, algo, poco o nada?
1. Mucho 2. Algo 3. Poco 4. Nada 8. NS/NR

- 3.13 Puede decirme cuáles servicios municipales recibe Ud.?
- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. tramites (cédulas, permisos, etc.) | 5. mercados públicos |
| 2. tren de aseo | 6. arreglo de las calles |
| 3. alumbrado público, energía eléctrica | 7. escuelas |
| 4. agua potable | 8. salud básico |

3.14 Puede decirme que impuestos locales paga Ud.? **[ANOTE TODOS]** 1. Si 2. No paga 8. NS/NR 9. NA

- 3.15 Estaría Ud. dispuesto a pagar más impuestos a la Alcaldía para que ésta pueda prestar mejores servicios municipales o cree Ud. que no vale la pena pagar más?
- | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| 1. más impuestos | 2. no vale la pena pagar más | 8. NS |
|------------------|------------------------------|-------|

- 3.16 Cree Ud. que los regidores y el Alcalde del concejo municipal responden a lo que quiere el pueblo casi siempre, la mayoría de las veces, de vez en cuando, casi nunca, o nunca?
- | | | | |
|------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. siempre | 2. la mayoría de las veces | 3. de vez en cuando | 4. casi nunca |
| 5. nunca | 8. NS | | |

4.0 [PARTICIPACIÓN POR EL GOBIERNO NACIONAL]

4.1 Sabe Ud. el nombre de un diputado(a) de este departamento 1. Sabe 2. NS 8. NR

- 4.2 Alguna vez ha pedido Ud. ayuda o cooperación de un diputado, la gobernadora (a) u algotro ministerio u agencia del gobierno nacional? Por ejemplo la BFA, la Procuraduría de los Pobres, o Proc. de Derechos Humanos, CENTA Min. de Defensa, Sec. Nacional de Familia?
- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|----------|
| 1. Si | 2. No [PASE a 4.7] | 8. NS/NR |
|-------|---------------------------|----------|

4.3 **[EN CASO AFIRMATIVO]** Que pidió? 8. NS/NR 9. NA

4.4 Y, recibió lo que pidió? 1. Si **[PASE A 4.6]** 2. No. 8. NS/NR 9. NA

4.5 **[EN CASO NEGATIVO]** Porque piensa que no recibió lo que pidió? **[ANOTE LA RESPUESTA]** 8. NS/NR 9. NA

- 4.6 En general, cómo considera que le han tratado cuando ha tenido que ir a la oficina de esta agencia? Le han tratado muy bien, bien, regular, mal o pésimo?
- | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------|------------|--------|-----------|-------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Muy bien | 2. bien | 3. regular | 4. mal | 5. pésimo | 8. NS | 9. No trataron con el gobierno |
|-------------|---------|------------|--------|-----------|-------|--------------------------------|

- 4.7 Diría Ud. que los servicios que el gobierno está dando a la gente son excelentes, buenos, regulares, malos o pésimos?
- | | | | | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|---------|-----------|-------|
| 1. excelente | 2. bueno | 3. regular | 4. malo | 5. pésimo | 8. NS |
|--------------|----------|------------|---------|-----------|-------|

- 4.8 Hasta que punto diría Ud. que el gobierno está interesado en la participación de la gente para resolver los problemas de la comunidad? Diría que es mucho, algo, poco o nada?
- | | | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1. Mucho | 2. Algo | 3. Poco | 4. Nada | 8. NS/NR |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|

- 4.9 A su juicio, cree Ud. que el trabajo del gobierno es más para beneficio de los ricos, más para beneficio de los pobres, a todos, o sólo para el beneficio de sus propios funcionarios?
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|
| 1. ricos | 2. pobres | 3. funcionarios | 4. Todos | 5. Ricos y funcionarios | 8. NS/NR |
|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|

5.0 [PARTICIPACIÓN POR OTRAS INSTITUCIONES/ ONGS]

Aparte de al alcaldía e instancias del gobierno nacional, quizá hay unas Organizaciones No-Gubernamental (o sea ONGs) que trabaja en este comunidad.

5.1 Podría decirme Ud. el nombre de alguna otra institución [ONG] que trabaja en este comunidad? 1. Sí - Nombre: _____ 2. No/NS. [PASE A 6.1] 8. NR	5.1
5.2 Que hace este institución [ONG]? 1. infraestructura (vivienda, calle, escuela) 2. servicios (agua, luz, salud) 3. educación (alfabetización) 4. Asistencia productiva 5. Capacitación organizativa/liderazgo 6. Medio-ambiente 7. investigación 8. NS/NR 9. NA	5.2
5.3 Alguna vez ha pedido Ud. ayuda o cooperación a este ONG? 1. Sí 2. No [PASE a 5.8] 8 NS/NR 9. NA	5.3
5.4 [EN CASO AFIRMATIVO] Que pidió? _____ 8. NS/NR 9. NA	5.4
5.5 Y, recibió lo que pidió? 1. Sí [PASE A 5.7] 2. No. 8. NS/NR 9. NA	5.5
5.6 Porque piensa que no no recibió lo que pidió? [ANOTE LA RESPUESTA] 8. NS/NR 9. NA	5.6
5.7 En general, cómo considera que le han tratado cuando ha tenido que ir a una oficina o hablar con un promotor de una ONG? Le han tratado muy bien, bien, regular, mal o pésimo? 1. Muy bien 2. bien 3. regular 4. mal 5. pésimo 8. NS 9. No trataron con una ONG	5.7
5.8 Diría Ud. que los servicios que la ONG está dando a la gente son excelentes, buenos, regulares, malos o pésimos? 1. excelente 2. bueno 3. regular 4. malo 5. pésimo 8. NS 9. NA	5.8
5.9 Hasta que punto diría Ud. que esta ONG está interesado en la participación de la gente para resolver los problemas de la comunidad? Diría que es mucho, algo, poco o nada? 1. Mucho 2. Algo 3. Poco 4. Nada 8. NS/NR 9. NA	5.9
5.10 A su juicio, cree Ud. que el trabajo de las ONGs es más para beneficio de los ricos, más para beneficio de los pobres, a todos, o sólo para el beneficio de sus propios funcionarios? 1. ricos 2. pobres 3. funcionarios 4. todos 5. ricos y funcionarios 8. NS/NR 9. NA	5.10

6.0 PARTICIPACIÓN GENERAL

6.1 En su opinion, quien o quienes toman las decisiones más importantes de este comunidad? [ANOTE: ADESCOS, ALCALDE, CONCEJO MUNICIPAL, ONGS, TODA LA COMUNIDAD] 8. NS 9. NR	6.1
6.2 Ud. está de acuerdo con eso? Como así? 8. NS/NR	6.2

6.3	Diría que personas como Ud. tienen mucha influencia, poca o nada de influencia sobre las decisiones que toman los grupos de esta comunidad?	1. Mucha	2. Poca	3. Nada	8. NS/NR	
6.4	Alguna vez ha trabajado o tratado Ud. de resolver algún problema de la comunidad o de los vecinos de aquí?	1. Sí	2. No	8. NS		
6.5	Ha dado Ud. su propio trabajo o mano de obra voluntariamente?	1. Sí	2. No	8. NS		
6.6	Ha tratado de ayudar Ud. a organizar algún grupo nuevo para resolver algún problema local, o para buscar alguna mejora?	1. Sí	2. No	8. NS		
6.7	Ha participado Ud. en algun manifestación pública para solicitar una mejora sobre un problema de la comunidad?	1. Sí [PASE A 6.8]	2. No [PASE A 6.11]	8. NS		
6.8	Puede describir el problema que impulsó la manifestación?			8. NS/NR	9. NA	
6.9	Puede describir el objetivo de la manifestación?			8. NS/NR	9. NA	
6.10	Donde fue la protesta?			8. NS/NR	9. NA	
Ahora le voy a leer una lista de grupos y organizaciones. Por favor, dígame si Ud. asiste a reuniones de ellos frecuentemente, de vez en cuando, casi nunca o nunca:						
		FREQ.	DE VEZ	CASI NU	NUNCA	N/R
6.11	grupo religioso?	1	2	3	4	8
6.12	asociación de padres de familia de la escuela?	1	2	3	4	8
6.13	ADESCO o directiva comunal de mejoras en la comunidad	1	2	3	4	8
6.14	sindicato?	1	2	3	4	8
6.15	cooperativa o UDP?	1	2	3	4	8
6.16	otra organización comunitaria (partido, juvenil, club de deportes, listados, ecologico, AA) [ANOTE:]	1	2	3	4	8
SOLO MUJERES: [HOMBRES PASE A 6.19]						
		FREQ.	DE VEZ	CASI NU	NUNCA	N/R
6.17	algún grupo, asociación o cooperativa de mujeres?	1	2	3	4[PASE A 6.19]	8 9
6.18	Desde que Ud. se unió a este grupo de mujeres, le parece que su influencia en la comunidad ha aumentado mucho, algo o nada?	1. Mucho	2. Algo	3. Nada	8. NS	9. NA/Hombre
HOMBRES Y MUJERES:						
6.19	Hablando de la participación de mujeres en la comunidad en organismos o asociaciones, qué tanta influencia cree Ud. que tienen los mujeres sobre las decisiones que toman estos grupos? Diría que tienen mucha influencia, poca o nada de influencia.	1. Mucha	2. Poca	3. Nada	8. NS	
6.20	Comparado con antes de la guerra, diría Ud. que ahora las mujeres de la comunidad tienen más influencia en la comunidad, tienen menos influencia, o tienen la misma influencia?	1. Mas influencia	2. Menos influencia	3. La misma	8. NS	

7.0 [SOLUCIÓN DE PROBLEMAS LOCALES]

7.1 En su opinión, cuál es el problema más grave que está enfrentando la [NOMBRE DE LA COMUNIDAD]?

No me refiero al principal problema de todo el país, sino al principal problema de esta comunidad.

[ACEPTE SOLO UN PROBLEMA Y ANOTELO, SI NO SABE, SIGUE CON LA PREGUNTA 7.2]

88 = NS/NR

7.2 En su opinión, cómo surgió este problema?

7.3 Ud. piensa que puede hacer algo para ayudar a solucionar este problema?

1. Sí **[PASE A 7.4]** 2. No **[PASE A 8.1]** 8. NS/NR

7.4 Que haría Ud. para tratar de solucionar este problema?

8.0 [EVALUACION DE PROYECTOS COMUNALES]

Puede mencionar un proyecto en esta comunidad en que ha participado o que le ha beneficiado a Ud. o su familia?

[SI CONTESTA NO, PASE A 9.1 PERO SONDEA CON SUGERENCIAS]

8.1 1. infraestructura (vivienda, calle, escuela) 2. servicios (agua, luz, salud) 3. educación (alfabetización)
4. Producción 5. Capacitación organizativa/liderazgo 6. Medio-ambiente 7. investigación 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.2 **[SI LA RESPUESTA ES "SI"]** Quién propuso este proyecto?

1. La comunidad 2. alcalde(esa) 3. Gobierno Central 4. FISDL 5. AID / EU
6. ONG: **[ANOTE]** 7. Otro **[ANOTE]** 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.3 Quién decidió que se financiara el proyecto?

1. La comunidad 2. El alcalde(esa) 3. Gobierno Central 4. FISDL 5. ONG 6. Intl. donante 7. Varios (alcalde y otro) 8. NS/NR 9. NA

Cómo participaron las personas de la comunidad en ese proyecto?

8.4 Uds. dieron mano de obra voluntaria? 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.5 Uds. donaron materiales? 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.6 Uds. ayudaron en diseñar el proyecto (participaron diagnóstico principal, definición del problema) 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.7 Elijieron el personal directivo del proyecto o contratista 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.8 Velaron con la contabilidad del presupuesto 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.9 Evaluaciones del proyecto 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.10 Dirección de la Institución a nivel local 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.11 Otro 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.12 Cree Ud. que el promotor de **[NOMBRE DE INSTITUCION FACILITADOR]** entiende los problemas de la comunidad? 1. Si 2. No 3. No tiene promotor 8. NS/NR 9. NA

[SOLO SI HA PARTICIPADO]

8.13 Pensando en su participación en [NOMBRE DE PROYECTO Y INSTITUCION] puede decirme porque ha participado en este proyecto? **[ANOTE UNO DE LOS SIGUIENTES CATEGORIAS:]**

1. Era obligatorio 2. aprovechar ventajas materiales 3. contribuye a un cambio social
4. aprender tareas 5. contactos sociales 6. otro: _____ 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.14 Cree Ud. que fué suficiente participación en el proyecto? 1. Si **[PASE A 8.16]** 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.15 Porque piensa Ud., no fue mayor participación en el proyecto? 8. NS/NR 9. NA

8.16 **[SOLO SI HA PARTICIPADO]** Que beneficios ha recibido Ud. a traves de su participación en ese proyecto?

9.0 CONFIANZA INTERPERSONAL

9.1 Ahora, hablando de la gente de aquí, diría Ud. que en general la gente es muy confiable, algo confiable, poco confiable, o nada confiable?

1. Muy confiable 2. Algo Confiable 3. Poco confiable 4. Nada confiable 8. NS

9.2 Cree Ud. que la mayoría de las veces la gente se preocupa solo por sí misma, o cree que la mayoría de las veces la gente trata de ayudar al prójimo?

1. Preocupa por sí misma 2. Ayudarle al prójimo 8. NS

9.3 Cree Ud. que la mayoría de la gente trataría de aprovecharse de Ud. si les presentara la oportunidad, o cree que no se aprovecharían?

1. Si se aprovecharían 2. No se aprovecharían 8. NS

10. EFICACIA COLECTIVA/LASOS SOCIALES

Que tan dispuestos piensa Ud. que sus vecinos podrían estar para ayudarle en las siguientes tareas? Diría que podrían estar muy dispuesto, algo dispuesto, poco dispuesto, o nada dispuesto para:

	Muy dispuesto	Algo dispuesto	Poco Dispuesto	Nada	NS/NR/NA
10.1 Le cuidarían sus hijos?	1	2	3	4	8
10.2 Le cuidarían sus hijos por una semana si Ud. tuviera que ausentarse?	1	2	3	4	8
10.3 Lo cuidarían a sus tareas si se enfermara?	1	2	3	4	8
10.4 Le ayudarían a reparar su casa o transportar la cosecha?	1	2	3	4	8
10.5 Le ayudarían prestándole dinero?	1	2	3	4	8
10.6 Si la comunidad enfrentara un problema grave (por ejemplo los costos excesivos de la energía eléctrica o contaminación de la comunidad por una empresa vecinal), hasta donde puede confiar en sus vecinos para solucionarlo. Diría que podía confiar mucho, poco, algo o nada en sus vecinos.	1. Mucho	2. Algo	3. Poco	4. Nada	8. NS/NR
10.7 Si el gobierno anunciara un proyecto que haría daño a la comunidad y algunos de sus vecinos tratan de organizar una protesta por el proyecto, hasta que punto estaría Ud. dispuesto participar en esta actividad?	1. Muy dispuesto	2. Algo dispuesto	3. Poco dispuesto	4. Nada dispuesto	8. NS/NR

10.8 Algunos dicen que para mejorar la vida de la gente de **[NOMBRE DE LA COMUNIDAD]**, todos deben juntarse para solucionar los problemas de este lugar. Otros dicen que cada uno debe solucionar sus propios problemas por sí mismo. En general, con cuál perspectiva está Ud. de acuerdo?

1. juntarse 2. cada uno por sí mismo 3. ninguno 4. juntarse, pero no se puede aquí 8. NS/NR

10.9 Algunos dicen también que es necesario que se mejoren las condiciones económicas aunque a corto plazo algunos ganen más que otros. Hasta qué punto está Ud. de acuerdo con eso?

1. Muy de acuerdo 2. Algo de acuerdo 3. Algo en contra 4. Muy en contra 8. NS/NR

11. ELECCIONES

Ahora vamos hablar de las elecciones nacionales:

11.1 Votó Ud. en las pasadas elecciones?

1. Sí **[SEGUIR CON 11.2]** 2. No **[PASAR A 11.6]**

Estaría Ud. dispuesto a decirme por cuál partido político votó en las últimas elecciones?

[SI CONTESTA "SI" SIGA, SI CONTESTA "NO" PASE A 11.3]

USAR LOS CÓDIGOS :

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. ARENA (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista) | 6. CD (Convergencia Democrática) |
| 2. FMLN | 7. Coalición (FMLN-CD-MNR) |
| 3. PDC (Partido Demócrata Cristiano) | 8. MNR (Movimiento Nacional Revolucion.) |
| 4. PCN (Partido de Conciliación Nacional) | 9. MSN (Movimiento de Solidaridad Nacional) |
| 5. MU | 10. Otro: _____ |
| 88. No votó | |
| 95. El voto es secreto, no quiere decir | |
| 99. Votó en blanco/nulo | |

11.2 **[SI VOTÓ]** Por cuál partido para alcalde? Código _____.

11.3 Votó Ud. en las elecciones para Presidente de 1994? 1. Sí **[SEGUIR CON 11.4]** 2. No **(PASAR A 11.6)**

11.4 **[SI VOTÓ]** Por cuál partido para presidente? Código _____.

11.5 **[SI VOTÓ]** Por cuál partido para alcalde? Código _____.

11.6 **[SI NO VOTÓ]** Por qué no votó?

1. Enfermedad 2. Falta de Transporte 3. Violencia/falta de seguridad 4. No inscrito 5. por trabajo
6. No creer en las elecciones. 7. Perdió carnet 12. No tener el carnet 14. No tener edad
88. NS/NR 99. Inap (si votó) Otro (especificar) _____.

12. CULTURA CÍVICA:

12.1 Sabemos que muchos Salvadoreños no votan. Algunas personas dicen que no vale la pena votar, otros dicen que sí vale la pena, que cree Ud.?

1. Vale 2. Depende 3. No Vale 8. NS

Ahora voy a leer algunas razones que dicen la gente para no votar. Por favor diga Ud. hasta que punto está muy de acuerdo, algo de acuerdo, algo en contra o muy en contra de los siguientes.

Muy de acuerdo Algo de acuerdo Algo en contra Muy en contra NS/NR

12.2 La gente no vota porque creen que su voto no influye en la política. 1 2 3 4 8

12.3 La gente no vota porque creen que los partidos son corruptos. 1 2 3 4 8

- 12.4 La gente no vota porque creen que no entienden la política. 1 2 3 4 8
- 12.5 Algunas personas dicen que no vale la pena participar en la política, porque de todos modos uno no tiene ninguna influencia en las decisiones del gobierno. Que piensa Ud. de esto? Está:
1. Muy de acuerdo 2. Algo de acuerdo 3. Algo en contra 4. Muy en contra 8. NS

12.4
12.5

13.0 CONSECUENCIAS DE LA GUERRA

- 13.1 Ud. ha perdido algún miembro de su familia o pariente cercano, como consecuencia del conflicto armado.
1. Sí 2. No 8. NS
- 13.2 Algún miembro de su familia tuvo que refugiarse o abandonar su lugar de origen por razones del conflicto?
1. Sí 2. No 8. NS
- 13.3 Algún miembro de su familia tuvo que irse del país?
1. Sí 2. No 8. NS

13.1
13.2
13.3

14.0 APOYO PARA EL SISTEMA

Hasta qué punto tiene Ud. confianza en las siguientes instituciones nacionales y locales:

- 14.1 Diría Ud. que tiene mucho, algo, poco o ninguna confianza en la Policía Nacional Civil?
1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ninguna 8. NS
- 14.2 Diría Ud. que tiene mucho, algo, poco o ninguna confianza en los partidos políticos?
1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.3 Tribunal Supremo Electoral? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.4 Fuerzas Armadas? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.5 la Asamblea Legislativa? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.6 el Gobierno? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.7 la Gobierno local, o sea la alcaldía? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.8 Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.9 la Iglesia Católica? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.10 Medios de Comunicación 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS
- 14.11 ONG [SI LA HA MENCIONADO]? 1. mucho 2. algo 3. poco 4. ningun 8. NS 9. NA
- 14.12 Hasta qué punto cree Ud. que los derechos humanos del ciudadano están bien protegidos por el sistema político Salvadoreño. Diría Ud. que los derechos humanos están bien, algo, o poco protegidos?
1. bien 2. algo 3. poco 8. NS

14.1
14.2
14.3
14.4
14.5
14.6
14.7
14.8
14.9
14.10
14.11
14.12

15. DERECHO DE DISSENTIR/TOLERANCIA:

Ahora las siguientes preguntas tratan con su opinion sobre personas que siempre hablan mal de al forma de gobierno Salvadoreño. Quisiera que me dijiera con qué firmeza Ud. aprobaría o desaprobaría que las personas hagan estas acciones.

- 15.1 Hay personas que solamente hablan mal de la forma de gobierno Salvadoreño. Con qué firmeza Ud. aprueba o desaprueba el derecho votar de esas personas?
1. desaprueba mucho 2. desaprueba algo 3. aprueba algo 4. aprueba mucho 8. NS

15.1

- 15.2 Pensando siempre en aquellas personas que hablan mal de la forma del gobierno Salvadoreño, con que firmeza aprueba o desaprueba Ud. que estas personas puedan llevar a cabo manifestaciones pacíficas con el propósito de expresar sus puntos de vista?
1. desaprueba mucho 2. desaprueba algo 3. aprueba algo 4. aprueba mucho 8. NS.
- 15.3 Con que firmeza Ud. aprueba o desaprueba Ud. que a las personas que sólo hablan mal de la forma de gobierno Salvadoreño, les permitan postularse para cargos públicos?
1. desaprueba mucho 2. desaprueba algo 3. aprueba algo 4. aprueba mucho 8. NS
- 15.4 Pensando siempre en aquellas personas que hablan mal de la forma de gobierno Salvadoreño, con qué firmeza aprueba o desaprueba Ud. que salgan en la televisión para hacer un discurso?
1. desaprueba mucho 2. desaprueba algo 3. aprueba algo 4. aprueba mucho 8. NS

16.0 [APOYO PARA CAMBIOS RADICALES]

Ahora le voy a leer tres frases. Por favor dígame cual de las tres describe mejor su opinión:

- 16.1 1. La forma en que nuestra sociedad está organizada debe ser completamente y radicalmente cambiada por medios revolucionarios.
2. Nuestra sociedad debe ser gradualmente mejorada o perfeccionada por reformas.
3. Nuestra sociedad debe ser valientemente defendida de los movimientos revolucionarios.
8. NS

Ahora para terminar, las últimas preguntas...

16.2 Cuál es su religión?

1. Católica (practicante) 2. Católica (no practicante) 3. Protestante- Evangélica
4. Ninguna 5. Otro 6. No quiere decir 8. NS/NR

16.3 Cuántas veces ha asistido Ud. a la iglesia durante el mes pasado? _____ veces 88. NS/NR

16.4 Algunas personas dicen que si nos acercáramos más a Dios, los problemas de nuestro país se resolverían solos. Hasta qué punto está de acuerdo con eso?
1. Muy de acuerdo 2. Algo de acuerdo 3. Algo en contra 4. Muy en contra 8. NS/NR

17.0 DESMOVILIZADOS

17.0 Es Ud. ex-combatiente del FMLN o ex-miembro de FAES o beneficiario del PTT? 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR

[SI CONTESTA "SI" PASE A LA PRÓXIMA PREGUNTA, SI "NO" PASE A 18.1]

17.1 En que sirvió Ud. ? 1. FMLN 2. FAES 3. Base de FMLN/PTT 4. Defensa Civil/ Patrullas 8. NR 9. NA

17.2 Con respecto a los beneficios dados a los ex-combatientes y beneficiarios por los Acuerdos de Paz, ha recibido algun beneficio? 1. Si 2. No [PASE A 17.9] 8. NS/NR 9. No aplica

17.3 Recibió tierra? 1. cuánto? _____ mz 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. No Aplica

17.4 La mantiene todavía? 1. Si 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. No aplica

17.5 Dónde se encuentra su tierra? 8. NS/NR 9. No aplica

17.6 Recibió crédito? 1. la suma _____ 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. No Aplica

17.7 Para que lo utilizó? 8. NS/NR 9. No Aplica

17.8 Recibió capacitación? 1. el tipo _____ 2. No 8. NS/NR 9. No Aplica

17.9 Hasta qué punto se encuentra Ud. satisfecho con los beneficios que ha recibido o no recibido ? Diría Ud. que se encuentra muy satisfecho, algo satisfecho, algo insatisfecho, o muy insatisfecho ?
1. Muy satisfecho 2. Algo satisfecho 3. Algo insatisfecho 4. Muy insatisfecho 8. NS 9. NA

[PARA LOS QUE CONTESTAN ALGO O MUY INSATISFECHO]

17.10 Cuál es la razón por la que se encuentra insatisfecho con los beneficios que ha recibido o no recibido?



17.11 Cuáles fueron las razones para incorporarse en el [FMLN/FAES]?



17.12 A qué edad se incorporó en el FMLN/FAES? _____ años. 88. NS/NR 9. No Aplica

17.13 Que ha logrado personalmente, por su experiencia en la guerra?

**[PARA TODOS]**

18.1 Para Ud., cuales son los logros de la guerra? 8. NS/NR



18.2 Que mejoras de vida quisiera alcanzar en el futuro? 8. NS/NR

**FINAL**

Estas son todas las preguntas que tengo. Muchísimas gracias por su colaboración.

Hora terminada la entrevista:

Hora : _____

T1 Duración de la entrevista (minutos)

T1: _____

Yo juro que esta entrevista fue llevada a cabo con la persona indicada.

Firma del entrevistador _____

Comentarios:



Survey Codes for the open ended questions:

1.26 Why have you not diversified your agricultural production?

1. Tradition, lack of security regarding change
2. Lack of land, renting now and not worth it to invest
3. Lack of resources (inputs)
4. Lack of irrigation, the land is not apt for irrigation.
5. Lack of land security, access to land but without title
6. Lack of technical assistance
7. Other
8. NS/NR (Don't know or No Response)
9. NA (Not applicable)

2.7 Where did your family go to work on the harvests before the war?

1. Coffee fincas on the volcano
2. Sugar cane farms
3. Cotton farms
4. Other
8. NS/NR

2.12 Describe changes in your life or the lives of your family between now and before the war? Were things better, worse or the same? Please describe.

1. Life was better before: things were less expensive, there was less delinquency/crime related violence.
2. It is the same as before: we are poor now just as before.
3. Ambivalent: better and worse, there are more services although there is also more crime/violence, less work, and things are more expensive now.
4. Life is better now: there is some work, more services, and we live better.
5. Life is much better now: we have access to education, work, more opportunities and freedoms.

3.7/4.3/5.4 What did you ask for in your meeting with the mayor or municipal council/government official/NGO? (Individual vs. Collective Ask)

1. A simple *tramite* (procedure/transaction)
2. Personal credit, job reference or recommendation (letter), or personal favorite
3. Infrastructure or basic service project for my community.
4. Attention to some community problem.
5. Recognition of a community group/organization.
6. Indemnification, benefits related to the Peace Accords for a group
7. Other
8. NS/NR

3.9/4.5/5.6 Why did you not receive what you asked for?

1. We the poor ("uno de pobre") are typically did not taken into account.
2. The project was never completed, it just ended.
3. There were not sufficient funds.
4. Poor administration or corruption related to the relevant funds.

5. Lack of local organizational capacity, interest or will en the government agency or NGO
6. Lack of organization en the community or individual.
7. The process is underway but unfinished.
8. NS/NR

5.1 Name of the NGO that you works in your community?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Habitat for Humanity | 41. IGLESIA BAUTISTA (IBBE) |
| 2. None | 42. LAS DIGNAS |
| 3. OEF | 43. CARE |
| 4. CORDES | |
| 5. FUNDE | |
| 6. ASDI | |
| 7. FUSAI | |
| 8. NS/NR | |
| 9. NA | |
| 10. CRIPDES | |
| 11. PROCOMES | |
| 12. FUNDASAL | |
| 13. SES | |
| 14. APROCSAL | |
| 15. FEDECOOPADES | |
| 16. CREA | |
| 17. FUNDACION SHARE | |
| 18. ALFALIT | |
| 19. FUNPROCOOP | |
| 20. PHILADELPHIA SISTER CITY | |
| 21. FUNDACAMPO | |
| 22. FUNDESA | |
| 23. ITAMA | |
| 24. HIBASA/PCI | |
| 25. FUNDAGUADALUPE | |
| 26. CNC/ACOPAI | |
| 27. ORC | |
| 28. SACDEL | |
| 29. CARITAS | |
| 30. INFSAFORP | |
| 31. FUNDASPAD | |
| 32. ASSOC. ECOLOGICO CHINCHON. | |
| 33. ACT | |
| 34. FUNDANONUALCO | |
| 35. TECHNOSERVE | |
| 36. IGLESIA LUTERANA | |
| 37. MSM/MCM | |
| 38. CODECOSTA | |
| 39. PROVIDA | |
| 40. COMUS | |

6.1 Who makes the most important decisions in this community?

1. No one, there is no that makes decisions, everyone for themselves.
2. The mayor (by him or herself).
3. The mayor and the council, and/or some individual, unelected authorities.
4. ADESCOs (community organizations) or community board members with the mayor.
5. Everyone, all of the community
6. ADESCOS/board members without the mayor.
7. All of the community, without the mayor.
8. Don't know
9. No response.

6.2 Are you in agreement with this situation?

1. Strongly disapprove, with informed explanation
2. Somewhat disapprove, less informed explanation
3. Approve, but resigned, not informed
4. Somewhat approve, but with some concerns
5. Strongly approve, highly informed
6. NS/NR

6.8 What was the problem that was the topic of the protest?

6.9 What was the objective of the protest?

6.10 Where was the protest held?

1. in the community
2. in the municipal center
3. in the departmental capital
4. in San Salvador
5. Other (at the factory, the mill, the beneficio)
8. NS/NR
9. NA

7.1 What is the most serious local problem?

1. Land, ownership or the lack of it (security)
2. Unemployment, lack of permanent work
3. Misadministration of public funds
4. Criminal violence/delinquency
5. Lack of organization
6. Basic infrastructure (housing, schools, roads)
7. Services (water, light, health)
8. Economic conditions, poverty
9. Loss of values
10. Environment

11. Credit, agrarian debt
12. Human rights violations
13. Indemnification/compliance with the Peace Accords
88. NS/NR

7.2 How did this problem emerge?

1. Limited response (the war, the government or mayor did not do something, or it has always been that way)
2. Intermediate response (slightly more detail)
3. Formulated response (highly detailed and analytical)
8. NS/NR

7.4 What would you do to help solve this problem?

1. Conformist: nothing, only God knows, what can one person do?
2. Dependent: Government/mayor/police should do their duty
3. Offer individual support: provide my labor, or donation of material, participate in the cabildo abierto
4. Communal organization: We would support the mayor/council/NGO with collective contributions of labor, material, or funds
5. Collective organization that goes beyond cabildo abiertos: collective contributions of labor, material, or funds – and if necessary, political pressure or protest.
8. NS/NR

8.15 What was there not greater participation in the project?

1. We did not know anything about it, they did not ask us
2. Conflict with work commitments or no remuneration was offered
3. The people don't want the project, participation was not worth it
4. The project was poorly administered.
5. We have representatives that participate for the community
6. I did not like the promoter
7. Other
8. NS/NR

8.16 What benefits have you received from the project?

1. None, few
2. Only individual material benefits: salary, water access, a house, a road
3. We contributed to social change.
4. In addition to below (3), we received specific training and learned things
5. and we learned to organize
6. and we built solidarity
8. NS/NR

17.5 Where is your PTT land located?

1. Close to the community
2. Within the community
3. In another community, but the same department

4. In another department

17.5 In what did you invest your PTT credit?

1. housing
2. agriculture
3. transport
4. a store
5. carpentry shop
6. other business
7. personal/health
8. NS/NR
9. NA

17.10 Who/what is responsible for your not having received benefits for your war service?

1. government
2. FMLN/FAES commanders
3. 1 & 2
4. International donors/NGOS
5. Myself, ourselves, lack of interest or will
6. No one
7. NS/NR
8. NA

17.11 What were your reasons for joining the FMLN, militia, FAES, civil patrols?

1. Repression
2. Voluntary choice, based on my principles
3. Voluntary choice, with recruitment incentives or repression disincentives
4. Obligation, conscription, forced recruitment
5. Family ties
6. Economic reasons, other
8. NS/NR
9. NA

17.13 What have you achieved personally through your experience as a combatant?

1. Only negative results, wounds, loss.
2. Nothing
3. Discipline, experience
4. Specific material benefits
5. Pride in having struggled/served/defended the homeland/my people or the revolution
6. Other
8. NS/NR
9. NA

18.1 What are the achievements/results of the war?

1. Only negatives, losses

2. There are none: only the combatants or commanders enriched themselves
3. Peace, the Peace Accords
4. Some changes for the better: (elimination of the death squads, former security forces, some economic opportunity, access to land, improvements in the judicial system, respect for human rights, political freedoms)
5. Many changes for the better (see 4 above)
8. NS/NR

18.2 What improvements would you like to achieve?

1. NS/NR Don't know
2. Conformist: Only God knows, nothing, maintain the current state, subsistence
3. Improvements for myself and my family: to achieve something more, to live better economically, without informed details
4. Collective, community or nation-wide improvements: without details, for all to live better, that the community has better services, land, etc.
5. Collective improvements with specific goals: To achieve much more than basic services or individual economic gains – structural opportunities for empowerment.

List of Institutions Interviewed

ACSUR	Acsur las Segovias
ADC	Asociación Democrática Campesina
AIFLD	American Institute for Free Labor Development
AL	Legislative Assembly
ALFALIT	Alfabetización y Literatura en El Salvador
ANTA	Asociación Nacional de Trabajadores Agropecuarios
ARENA	Nationalist Republican Alliance of El Salvador (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista de El Salvador)
ASDEC	Asociación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo Comunal
ASDI	Asociación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo Integral
ASMUR	Asociación de Mujeres Rurales
ASSOC. CAFE	Asociación Cafetalero
ATI	Appropriate Technologies International
AYUDA EN ACCION	Action Aid Spain
BCIE	Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica
BM	World Bank
BOLL	Heinrich Böll Foundation
CACH	Comité Ambiental de Chalatenango
CAMAGRO	Agricultural Chamber of Commerce
CARE	Cooperativa Americana de Remesas al Exterior (ONG)
CARITAS	
CBL	Coordinadora del Bajo Lempa
CDA	Departmental Mayors' Council (Consejo Departamental de Alcaldes)
CDHES	Centro de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador
CDM	Comité de Desarrollo Municipal
CE	Comisión Europea
CENTA	Centro Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria y Forestal
CHRISTIAN AID	
CIPHES	Interinstitutional Coordination of Human Promotion of El Salvador
CLUSA	Liga Cooperativas de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica
CNC	National Peasant Confederation
CND	National Development Commission
CODECOSTA	Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de la Costa
COMURES	Corporación de Municipalidades de la República de El Salvador
COMUS	Comunidades Unidas de Usulután
CONFRAS	Confederation of Federations of Agrarian Reform in El Salvador
CORDES	Asociación para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Comunal de El Salvador
COSUDE	Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación
CREA	Creative Associates International
CRECER	Proyecto Crecimiento Económico Equitativo Rural
CRIPDES	Salvadoran Committee for Displaced Persons
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DIAKONIA	Diakonia Sweden
DIDECO	Dirección de Desarrollo Comunal (Ministerio del Interior)
DIGESTYC	National Directorate for Statistical and Resources Development; Policy and Census Human Resources Development Fund
DIGNAS	Mujeres por La Dignidad y La Vida (Las Dignas)

ENTREPUEBLOS	
EZE	Evangeliches Zentrarstelle fur Entwicklungstillfe (Germany)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEDARES	Federación de Asociaciones de Regantes de El Salvador
FEDECACES	Federación de Asociaciones Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito de El Salvador
FEDECOOPADES	Federation of Cooperative Associations for Agricultural Production in El Salvador
FIDA	Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola
FISDL	Social Investment Fund for Local Development
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
FMLN	The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional)
FLM	Lutheran World Federation
FOMMI	Programa de Fomento a la Microempresa
FUNDACAMPO	Fundación Campo
FUNDAMUNI	Fundación de Apoyo a Municipios de El Salvador
FUNDAGUADALUPE	Fundación Guadalupe
FUNDAJIKUILISCO	Fundación Jiquilisco
FUNDAJUCUAPA	Fundación Jucuapa
FUNDANONUALCO	Fundación Nonualco
FUNDAUNGO	Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo
FUNDE	Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo
FUNDECIT-ITAMA	Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Ciencia y Tecnología
FUNDESA	Fundación para el Desarrollo
FUNPROCOOP	Fundación Promotora de Cooperativas
FUNSALPRODESE	Fundación Salvadoreña para la Promoción Social y el Desarrollo Económico
FUSADES	Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social
FUSAI	Fundación Salvadoreña de Apoyo Integral
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Sociedad para la Cooperación Técnica – Alemania)
HABITAT	Habitat for Humanity International
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Denmark)
IAF	Inter-American Foundation
IBIS	Education for Development (Denmark)
IDB	InterAmerican Development Bank
IICA	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura
IIZ	Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Institute for International Cooperation – Austria)
IMF	Internacional Monetary Fund
INTERMON	Oxfam Spain
ISDEM	Instituto de Desarrollo Municipal
ISTA	Instituto Salvadoreño de Transformación Agraria
JICA	Japanese Internacional Cooperation Agency
LEMPA ACAHUAPA	Lempa Acahuapa Irrigation District
MAG	Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería
MAM	Movimento de Mujeres Melida Anaya Montes
MARN	Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
MINEC	Ministerio de Economía

MINHA	Ministerio de Hacienda
MS	MS - Danish Association for International Co-operation
MSM	Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres
Municipality of Tecoluca	
Municipality of San Ildefonso	
Municipality of San Cayetano Istepeque	
Municipality of Nuevo Tepetitán	
Municipality of Verapáz	
Municipality of Guadalupe	
NOVIB	Oxfam Netherlands
OXFAM U.S.	
OXFAM QUEBEC	
OXFAM GREAT BRITIAN	
PCI	Project Concern International
PTM	Paz y Tercer Mundo (Spain INGO)
PNC	Policía Nacional Civil
PRISMA	Programa Salvadoreño de Investigación sobre Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente
PROCAFE	Fundación Salvadoreña para Investigaciones del Café
PROCOMES	Asociación de Proyectos Comunales de El Salvador
PRODAP	Proyecto de Desarrollo Agrícola para Pequeños Productores de la Región Paracentral (FIDA-GOES)
PROMUDE	Programa de Asesoramiento en el Fomento Municipal y la Descentralización (GTZ)
REDES	Fundación Salvadoreña para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SACDEL	Sistema de Asesoría y Capacitación para el Desarrollo Local
SES	Sistema Economic Social
SHARE	The SHARE Foundation
STC	Save the Children U.S.
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency (ASDI)
TECHNOSERVE	
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana ‘José Simeón Cañas’
UCRAPROBEX	Union de Cooperativas de la Reforma Agraria Productoras, Beneficiadoras y Exportadoras de R.L de C.V
UE	Unión Europea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VISION MUNDIAL	World Vision El Salvador
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America (Central America)

APPENDIX D: 1998 EHPM Survey Methodology to Derive Land Inequality Estimates

As has already been shown in some detail by Seligson (1995), describing the agrarian structure of El Salvador is not an easy task because of the absence of recent agricultural census data. The most recent agricultural census dates from 1971, and therefore is woefully inadequate to assess the current state of land inequality. Seligson developed a methodology of using the very large sample data obtained from the Multipurpose Household Survey in El Salvador (henceforth, EHPM), and constructed the agrarian tenure and occupation distribution for 1991. Here I modify that method to analyze the 1998 EHPM, which surveyed 12,352 households, gathering information on some 56,768 individuals.¹⁰³¹ The EHPM contains what are called “expansion factors” which, when applied to the data set allow us to estimate the actual population figures. Thus, throughout this study, whenever data are reported from that study, I use the expanded figures.

The 1998 data set for the first time provides information about the distribution of land and income at the departmental level. The 1998 sample was constructed so that each of El Salvador’s departments formed a self-representative stratum within the national sample, a feature that was not present in 1991, when the sample was subdivided into regions. I can therefore compare the agrarian inequality, landlessness and other variables of interest between departments. At the national level I can compare the 1998 EHPM survey with 1991 data, and with agricultural census data from 1950, 1961 and 1971 government agrarian census data (Table D.1). In this section, I summarize the changes to the Salvadoran agrarian structure over this time

¹⁰³¹ I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Phil Sidel, formerly of the University of Pittsburgh, Information Services Department, in the reconstruction of the EHPM dataset and application of Gini command syntax.

period at the national level, and the impact of land reform interventions intended to rectify extreme levels of agrarian inequality.¹⁰³²

The first task is to determine the size of the agricultural population. Replicating Seligson's (1995) methodology, I estimate the 1998 economically active adult population (EAP) in agriculture 16 years of age and older as 472,332 people.¹⁰³³ In addition, the 1998 survey found a total of 30,314 unemployed agricultural workers, which, when added to the employed population, sums to a total 1998 agricultural sector labor force of 502,646 persons (or 20.6% of EAP).

The second task is to examine the income data. Table D.2 shows the distribution and average incomes of the adult (16 years of age and older) economically active employed population by industrial sector.¹⁰³⁴ Not surprisingly, Salvadorans in the agricultural sector, on average, earn the lowest of all incomes among occupational categories. Near-poverty and below poverty incomes suggest one reason for the decline of employment in the agricultural sector; it is simply not an attractive occupation.¹⁰³⁵

¹⁰³² The 1991-92 EHPM survey excluded 40 conflictive municipalities. The most affected departments were Chalatenango (13 municipalities excluded), Morazán (13 missed) and La Unión (5), San Miguel (5), Usulután and Cuscatlán (2 each) and Cabañas (1). Results from the 1992 census showed that the 40 towns combined counted a total population of 196,188, almost 40% less than 1971 census data figures. The survey undercount also missed as many as 20,000 farms located in conflictive zones. The population decline is, no doubt, the result of conflict-induced displacement and a secular urbanization trend. The importance of both factors is discussed in more detail below. Extra caution should be taken with respect to the validity of comparisons using 1991 departmental income and land related data from the departments of Morazán, La Unión and Chalatenango, where the excluded populations and farm properties represent 46%, 21% and 14% of 1992 total department populations, respectively.

¹⁰³³ See Diskin (1996) and reply by Seligson (1996) for the justification of this age threshold. This calculation removes 6,975 auxiliary and administrative occupations, a procedure identical to that employed in the calculations performed on the 1991 data set.

¹⁰³⁴ Several industrial classifications were combined to produce the five categories in Table D.2. Agriculture includes fishing. Services include utilities, construction, transport and communication, communal and domestic services. Trade includes commerce, hotel and restaurants, and finance. Industry includes manufacturing and mines. The category "other" includes public administration, defense, education and various minor sectors.

¹⁰³⁵ Poverty was estimated as the number of households that reported income levels below the monetary value of the defined by the official expanded food basket of essential items. For 1997, the rural and urban expanded food baskets were reported to cost 1,947 colones and 2,498 colones, respectively. These values were adjusted by the 1.5% inflation rate in 1997-1998. Rural households reporting less than 1,976 colones per month (\$227), and urban families reporting incomes less than 2,535 colones per month (\$291), were considered to be living in relative poverty. A full discussion of poverty estimates is given in McElhinny and Seligson (2000).

Table D.1 Economically Active National and Agricultural Populations in El Salvador, 1950-1998

National 2A-5 Totals	1950 Census		1961 Census		1971 Census		1991-1992 EHPM		1998 EHPM	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Economically Active National Population (EANP)	653,409	100	807,092	100	1,166,479	100	1,781,582	100	2,403,194	100
EANP older than 15	588,068	90.0	727,736	90.2	1,043,334	89.4	1,633,993	91.7	2,234,970	93.0
EAP older than 15 active in agriculture	363,890	55.7	416,728	51.6	542,879	46.5	581,661	32.6	502,646	20.9
Sources: El Salvador Ministerio de Economía, 1950, 1965, 1967, 1975, 1977; Authors' calculations from the EHPM of 1991-92 and 1998										

Furthermore, post-war macroeconomic stability has not translated into major foreign direct investment for El Salvador.¹⁰³⁶ As a consequence, there has been negligible growth in the industrial sector, and thus little ability to absorb the outflow of agricultural sector workers. The reported mean individual income in industry is lower than in services or trade, another indication of stagnation in this sector.¹⁰³⁷ Employment in both services and industry have changed little in the 1990s, suggesting that most people leaving agriculture or entering the workforce remain unemployed or find work in the commercial sector (micro-enterprise, informal sector jobs). The category “other” includes government sector jobs (public administration, defense and education) which surprisingly, given the efforts to shrink the state, have not declined in relative terms.

With the exception of agriculture, all other employment sectors report mean incomes above the urban minimum wage, which was raised to 1,255 colones per month in 1998 (\$144, \$1=8.7 colones).¹⁰³⁸ The gap between the minimum wage and reported incomes may be due to the weight of higher salaries or other sources of income such as remittances, estimated at about 700 colones per household per month in 1998.¹⁰³⁹ In sum, Tables D.1 & D.2 underscore the decline of agriculture as the primary source of employment, the movement toward service and informal sector jobs, and the vast disparity in mean income between agricultural and non-agricultural occupations.

¹⁰³⁶ In 1998, CEPAL estimates that El Salvador received only 5% of all foreign direct investment to Central America, the lowest of the five countries. Costa Rica received two thirds of all regional FDI in 1998, largely as a result of the large investment by INTEL in a microchip factory constructed there (CEPAL, 1999).

¹⁰³⁷ The maquila sector has expanded to 200 factories by 2000, employing roughly 70,000 Salvadorans and generating \$945 million per year in export revenue. Even with the expected creation of 10-20,000 additional jobs from inclusion of El Salvador to free trade agreements with Mexico and the U.S., surplus labor supply still vastly exceeds demand. Moreover, the specific investment focus in maquilas has come at the expense of other industrial segments, as the reported increase in factory closings caused by the most recent economic slowdown indicates. *Diario de Hoy*, December 6, 2000. The plants are also mostly urban and tend to hire only young women.

¹⁰³⁸ With the decision to “dollarize” the economy in January 2001, U.S. dollars are now freely exchangeable in El Salvador.

¹⁰³⁹ One of the weaknesses of the DIGESTYC-EHPM is the under-reporting of remittances as a percent of family or individual income. In 1998, the Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador reported that the country received a total of \$1.34 billion in remittances, up from \$790 million in 1991 (*La Prensa Gráfica*, Jan. 23, 1999). These figures translate into \$221 for 1998 (\$1,000) per family per year and \$158 per capita per year in 1991. However, the DIGESTYC-EHPM estimates that average remittances for 1998 were \$52 per capita per year, and \$236 per family per year.

Table D.2 Employed Economically Active Salvadoran Population, Sixteen Years of Age and Older

2A-6					1998 Mean Individual Monthly Income	1998 Mean Individual Monthly Wage
	<i>1991</i>		<i>1998</i>			
Field of Activity	<i>Number</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(colones)</i>	<i>(colones)</i>
Agriculture	544,099	33	496,334	23.5	615	209
Services	336,344	21	431,774	20.4	2,108	1,098
Trade	291,665	18	613,438	29.0	2,064	1,064
Industry	290,883	18	401,093	19.0	1,959	931
Other	171,002	10	173,076	8.2	3,474	3,062
Total	1,633,993	100	2,115,715	100.0	1,800	1,072
Source: Authors' calculations from raw data of the El Salvador, Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (DIGESTYC-EHPM), 1991-1992 and 1998.						

Estimating the Landless and Land-poor Population

In order to calculate the magnitude of landlessness and land-poor in 1998, Table D.3 distinguishes between the landed and landless occupations within the agrarian labor force. Coding contradictions in the 1998 EHPM forced some deviation from Seligson's methodology for calculating landlessness and land-poor. Of the landed sub-categories of farmers who employ laborers, cooperative members and small farmers, some respondents were reported working no land. Conversely, in the sub-categories of permanent and temporary wage workers, as well as unpaid family laborers and even the unemployed, some respondents reported working land over 1 manzana (0.7 ha, and the specific cutoff point between land-poor and small farmer adopted by Seligson). Seligson (1995) found that for the 1991 EHPM dataset, 9.9% of agricultural laborers were simultaneously landholders who farmed as a second occupation, but most of whom owned 1 manzana or less.

In some cases the size of the farm and the income derived exclusively from farm related activities justified re-categorization of the primary agricultural occupation. Of the 22,640 respondents coded as farmers who employ laborers and 2,417 cooperative members, 1,384 and 706, respectively, did not report working any land and were reclassified as land-poor farmers.

Some 170,349 persons were coded as “cuenta propia,” (independent farmer) but divided between those “*con lugar*” (with property), 33,882 and those “*sin lugar*” (without property), 136,147. Of the first group, 2,720 reported no land and another 7,496 reported plots smaller than 1 mz. and both were classified as land-poor. A third group of 23,666 reported plots of one mz. or greater and were classified as small farmers. Among the second sub-category of independent farmers “*sin lugar*,” the same criterion produced 14,615 landless temporary wage workers, 43,918 land-poor farmers and 77,934 small farmers. Of the 69,437 permanent wage workers, 15,092 reported landholdings. However most were less than one mz., and for the 4,820 who had over one mz. the mean farm income was less than their mean wage income. Thus, no permanent wage workers were moved. For 133,074 temporary wage workers, 32,288 reported landholdings. Of these 11,921 had more than one mz. and their mean farm income was greater than their mean wage income and therefore were reclassified as landed farmers. Another 19,367 reported plots less than one mz., but their mean farm income was still greater than their mean wage income, and they were reclassified as land-poor farmers. Among unpaid family laborers, 245 reported working land greater than or equal to one mz., and having an income from farm activities greater than all other sources of income, and were thus reclassified as small farmers. Of the 30,314 unemployed population, 5,492 reported previously working land. Comparisons of farm size re-assigned 2,949 to landed farmer status, 5,023 to land-poor, 21,222 to landless wage laborer, 821 to permanent wage laborer and 299 to unpaid family laborer in Table D.1 (above).

Data for 1991 and 1998 are my calculations from the respective DIGESTYC-EHPM surveys, with the inclusion of all reported properties.¹⁰⁴⁰

Of principal interest is the extent to which land reforms have or have not improved the equality of landholding distribution between 1971 and 1998 (unadjusted total). One would think that this would be an easy task, but as I explain below, serious problems in underreporting of large farms complicates the issue considerably. Table D.3 based on census and survey data, shows that

¹⁰⁴⁰ Only the 1998 survey asked respondents to report the actual farm size in manzanas. The 1991 survey asked respondents to choose from a predetermined range of farm sizes. The top range was 50 manzanas and greater. Both surveys included questions on land use by crop. Total area per crop was reported, which permitted a cross-check of the 1998 farm size and a determination of actual 1991 farm size. A conservative estimate of the total area of the first crop (out of a maximum of four crops) was used as the actual farm size in the 1991 survey, and in the 1998 survey if the value was larger than the reported farm size. Double cropping, and planting more than one crop in the same farm during the same cycle prohibited adding all crops as an estimate of farm size. Investigation of the potential under-estimation of farm size by not adding all crops proved to be minimal.

the total number of farms has increased steadily since 1950, to 296,728 in 1998. However, the 1991 and 1998 surveys reflect an under-reporting of as much as 75% of total farmland. Prior work on this subject by Edelman and Seligson (1994) in Costa Rica has shown that, using the land registry as a supplementary source of data reveals widespread and systematic underreporting of land held in large farms in censuses and surveys. Those who hold such farms are very likely to register them in the land registry to legalize their claims, but some landowners try to avoid making such ownership widely known by not reporting the farms (or their full extension) in censuses. In El Salvador, where land conflicts have been so violent and expropriation so common, I suspect that the incentive to try to hide land ownership for even modest-sized holdings to be very great, especially after the initial outburst of state-led land reforms. Inspection of the distribution of farms, total farmland, and average farm size strongly suggests that farmers of the largest properties failed to report or vastly understated actual holdings.¹⁰⁴¹ The number of farms above 100 hectares (well within the constitutional limit of 245 hectares) appears to drop dramatically from 1,941 farms in 1971 to 173 in 1998, and average farm size drops from 289 ha to 138 ha. For the next lowest strata, the farms between 50-100 ha. also appear to have declined precipitously from 2,230 in 1971 to 837 in 1998.

In order to estimate land inequality in 1998, I must correct the DIGESTYC-EHPM data for the missing large farms and farm area. To do so, I determine the number of large and medium farms that remain after the most recent land reforms compared to the number of farms as reported by the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM. The area of the missing farms must then be estimated in order to restore the missing farm area in those upper strata. Therefore, the first step involves accounting for the farms redistributed through land reform programs since 1980. Fortunately, I was were able to obtain access to that data.

¹⁰⁴¹ Between 1950 and 1961, the number of farms in all strata increased, with the exception of the middle range farms of 5-50 hectares. Anticipation of impending redistributive reforms spurred a wave of parcelizations between 1966-1976 (especially in the departments of Usulután, La Paz, San Miguel and Ahuachapán). Thus between 1961 and 1971, the number of the largest farms decreased by 207 (a 10% drop), while the farms between 5 and 100 ha. increased as a consequence of the subdivision of larger farms. I estimate that half of the subdivided farm area was transferred into the medium farm strata, and the other half was transferred into the small farm strata or was removed from production altogether.

Correcting the Distribution Data: Estimated Impact of the Salvadoran Land Reforms

In order to adjust the 1998 land tenure survey data presented above for the undercounting of large farms, I make recourse of the extensive information on larger farms reported in the context of the land reforms undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s. As a whole, Salvadoran land reforms delivered only about half of what had been promised. As much as 60% of all farmland was potentially redistributable, benefiting as many as 248,500 landless and tenant farmers, or 44.5% of the economically active adult population in agriculture in 1980. However, only 118,787 peasants (21.2% of adult 1980 EAP in agriculture) gained access to land totaling about 30% of all farmland (400,000 hectares). The departments of Sonsonate, La Libertad, Ahuachapán, La Paz, San Vicente and Usulután experienced the greatest transformation, with between 23-30% of total area redistributed. In these departments I would expect the greatest decline in land inequality. I show below that this is largely the case, with the exceptions of La Paz and San Vicente, the other departments register the greatest improvements in estimated land inequality between 1961-1998.

The PTT redistributed 245 farms greater than 245 hectares and another 7,663 between 25 and 100 hectares (MAG-OCTA 1997). With these large farms converted into *minifundias* of 3 to 5 ha., I would expect the mean farm size in the highest segment (100 or more ha.) to have declined since 1988. Unfortunately, I can not make direct comparisons between the McReynolds, *et al.* data and the 1971 census data or the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM survey data, because the reported ranges of farms are inconsistent and I did not have access to the raw data from the 1988 study. However, the sample design data reported by McReynolds, *et al.* (1989) offer a method of estimating the missing farms in the 1998 dataset. The McReynolds survey estimate of large and medium size farms in 1988 offers a satisfactory intermediate estimate between 1971 and 1998. Based on information provided by the *Instituto Geográfica Nacional*, the McReynolds team designed their sample based on the estimated number of farms and average farm size for three strata of small, medium and large farms. Table D.4 presents this stratification for 1988, along with similarly reconfigured data for 1971 and 1998.

Table D.3 Agrarian Farm Size Structure, 1950-1998 (uncorrected for large farms, 1991 and 1998)

1950	Agrarian Census	Total	0 -1 ha	1-5 ha	5-10 ha	10-50 ha	50-100ha	>100 ha
	No. of Farms	174,204	70,416	70,057	14064	15,524	2107	2026
	% Total No. farms	100	40.4	40.2	8.1	8.9	1.2	1.2
	Total Area (ha)	1,530,323	35,204	154,986	99,441	328,811	147,640	764,231
	% of total area	100	2.3	10.1	6.5	21.5	9.6	50.0
	Ave. farm area	8.8	0.49	2.21	7.1	21.2	70.1	377.2
1961	Agrarian Census	Total	0 -1 ha	1-5 ha	5-10 ha	10-50 ha	50-100 ha	>100 ha
	No. of Farms	226,896	107,054	86,244	14001	15,235	2,214	2,148
	% Total No. farms	100	47.2	38.0	6.2	6.7	1.0	1.0
	Total Area (ha)	1,581,428	61,365	186,013	98,791	480,758	154,704	754,500
	% of total area	100	3.9	11.8	6.3	30.4	9.8	47.7
	Ave. farm area	6.97	0.57	2.2	7.1	31.6	69.9	351.3
1971	Agrarian Census	Total	0 -1 ha	1-5 ha	5-10 ha	10-50 ha	50-100 ha	>100 ha
	No. of Farms	270,868	132,464	102,477	15,598	16,150	2238	1941
	% Total No. farms	100	48.9	37.8	5.8	6.0	0.8	0.7
	Total Area (ha)	1,451,895	70,287	213,023	110,472	342,430	154,164	561,518
	% of total area	100	4.8	14.7	7.6	23.6	10.6	38.7
	Ave. farm area	5.4	0.53	2.1	7.1	21.2	68.9	289.3
1987	McReynolds Survey	Total		0-3.5 ha	3.5-14 ha	14-35 ha	35-70 ha	>70 ha
	No. of Farms	286,183		222,883	43,304	12,550	4,589	2,857
	% Total No. farms	100		77.9	15.1	4.4	1.6	1.0
	Total Area (ha)	1,334,758		201,503	275,097	262,094	217,378	378,676
	% of total area	100		15.1	20.6	19.6	16.3	28.4
	Ave. farm area	4.7		0.9	6.4	20.9	47.4	132.5
1991	DIGESTYC-EHPM Survey	Total	0 -1 ha	1-5 ha	5-10 ha	10-50 ha	50-100 ha	>100 ha
	No. of Farms	251,656	172,181	74,941	2103	2112	113	206
	% Total No. farms	100	68.4	29.8	0.8	0.8	0.0005	0.001
	Total Area (ha)	350,030	103,940	116,502	13,822	42,331	7,910	65,524
	% of total area	100	29.7	33.3	3.9	12.1	2.3	18.7
	Ave. farm area	1.4	0.60	1.55	6.6	20	70	318.1
1998	DIGESTYC-EHPM Survey	Total	0 -1 ha	1-5 ha	5-10 ha	10-50 ha	50-100 ha	>100 ha
	No. of Farms	296,728	198,699	87,424	6080	3566	837	173
	% Total No. farms	100	66.9	29.5	2.1	1.2	0.3	0.01
	Total Area (ha)	469,004	109,848	158,850	42,200	74,208	59,856	23,972
	% of total area	100	23.4	33.9	9.0	15.8	12.8	5.1
	Ave. farm area	1.6	0.55	1.82	6.9	21.1	71.4	138.2
Sources: DIGESTYC 1954, 1967, 1977; McReynolds, Johnston, Gore, and Francis (1989); Ministerio de Economía, DIGESTYC-EHPM 1991 and 1998								

Of the 2,199 farms greater than 100 hectares, I subtract the 310 Phase I cooperatives and 245 large farms redistributed through the PTT, leaving a new sub-total of 1,594 large farms that presumably exist in 1998 not taking into account subdivision independent of the PTT.¹⁰⁴² Subtracting 766 medium size farms transferred in the PTT from the 1988 estimate of 8,390, I estimate a sub-total of 7,663 medium farms. Comparing these estimates to the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM estimates, I find a deficit (the under-reporting) of 5,973 medium size farms and 1,424 large farms.

¹⁰⁴² It is worth noting that the original PERA stratification on which the McReynolds is based, lists at least 342 properties, excluding 310 cooperatives, in excess of legal limit of 245 ha. established in 1983. However, estimates of the number of cooperatives in El Salvador go as high as 350, perhaps accounted for some of the other large properties.

Table D.4 Estimating Change in Farm Distribution, 1971-1998

1971 Census	Total	0 - 20 ha.	20-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	270,868	259,703	9224	1941
% Total No. farms	100	95.9	3.4	0.8
Total Area (ha)	1,451,895	520,756	369,620	561,519
% of total area	100	35.9	25.5	38.7
Ave. farm area	5.4	2.0	40	289
1988 Survey	Total	0 - 25 ha.	25-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	269,832 a	259,243 a	8390	2199
% Total No. farms	100	96.1	3.1	0.8
Total Area (ha)	1,542,343	510,239	390,100	642,004
% of total area	100	33.0	25.0	42.0
Ave. farm area	5.7	2.24	46.5	291.9
1998 Survey	Total	0 - 25 ha.	25-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	296,728	294,865	1690	173
% Total No. farms	100	99.4	0.5	0.01
Total Area (ha)	561,393	442,230	94,883	24,280
% of total area	100	78.7	16.9	4.3
Ave. farm area	1.9	1.5	56.1	140.3
1998 Adj. Survey	Total	0 - 25 ha.	25-100 ha.	>100 ha.
No. of Farms	306,396	296,544	8347	1505
% Total No. farms	100	96.8	2.8	0.5
Total Area (ha) b	1,334,000	610,256	415,229	308,515
% of total area	100	45.7	31.1	23.1
Ave. farm area	4.4	2.1	49.7	205
Sources: DIGESTYC (1974), McReynolds, <i>et al.</i> (1989), DIGESTYC-EHPM 1998				

- a. Includes 40,233 farms less than 2 mz. (1.41 ha.) that were excluded from the original study. An average farm size of 0.5 ha. is estimated to add 20,117 ha. total farm area. Estimates of small farms were adjusted to account for anomalies in departmental distribution in order to calculate department level Gini coefficients. See Appendix D.5.
- b. Total farm area for medium and large farm strata is the sum of the reported farm area in the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM and the additional farm area derived in Appendix Tables D.6 and D.7. Subtracting the large and medium farm area from total area of 1,334,000 produces the total farm area for small farms.

Comparing 1971 Census data with the 1988 survey data, we see a consistency in the percent total farm area found in each stratum, as well as the average farm size. This lends credence to the 1988 distribution. As such, I may also accept a moderately adjusted percentage of stratified total farm area as 38% in large farms, 24% in medium size farms, and 38% in small farms.

Recall that the 642,004 ha. of large farm strata in 1988 includes 237,586 ha. of cooperative farm area. If cooperative area is excluded, the net area in large farms drops to 26%, and the average farm size for the remaining farms is 220 ha. that is used as an average large farm size for correction estimates in Table D.4. I use an estimate of 50 ha. for the average farm size of medium strata farms in Table D.4. If the cooperative sector is added to the small farm strata, the total area increases to 48.6%.

By examining the distribution of reported versus estimated farms per department in the medium and large strata (Tables D.6 and D.7), I can replace the missing farms and farm area according to a simple calculation.¹⁰⁴³ The adjusted land distribution estimates for the entire 1998 survey are shown as the last set of farm distribution estimates in Table D.4. The adjusted total number of farms is the sum of farms estimated by the DIGESTYC-EHPM and the farms added, for a total of 8,347 for the medium strata and 1,505 for large farms.¹⁰⁴⁴ Total added farm area in each stratum is estimated by multiplying the number of added farms by their respective farm size

¹⁰⁴³ The deficit in large farms are calculated for each department by subtracting the estimated number of farms in the DIGESTYC-EHPM (raw count multiplied by expansion factors) from the number of farms predicted by the McReynolds estimates of farms in each department after subtracting farms known to have been distributed through the PTT. An adjustment is then made to account for the independent subdivision of large farms since 1991. An attrition rate of 10% was set as a best guess estimate of the net subdivision of non-reform sector, large farms. Ten percent of the predicted farms are removed and transferred to the medium strata in equivalent size farms. Each department is given several weight factors in the 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM, often distinguishing between urban and rural areas. A department's deficit in farms for each stratum is divided by the lowest weight factor to generate the number of medium and large farms to be added. If the remainder is less than a full farm, the last farm size is prorated by this amount. Medium farms must be greater than or equal to 25 ha., but less than or equal to 100 ha. Large farms must be greater than or equal to 100 ha. For example, DIGESTYC-EHPM data for the department of Cuscatlán reported no large farms, but our estimates suggest that 33 large farms exist (Table A5, column 3). When reduced for attrition, 30 large farms are predicted (column 5). We then add one farm to the raw data file, which is weighted by a given factor of 67 (column 6). Since the weight factor of 67 is 123% greater than the predicted number of large farms, we reduce the value of the farm area of 220 by 123% to 100 ha. (column 7). Thus, when the DIGESTYC-EHPM is weighted, Cuscatlán now shows a frequency of 67 farms averaging 100 ha. This procedure was used to replace the missing large- (220 ha.) and medium-size (50 ha.) farms, and the respective farm area for each department.

¹⁰⁴⁴ The value for large farms is slightly lower than the estimated farm deficit of 1,594 because given the departmental weight factors, adjustments were made in average farm area.

(Tables D.6 and D.7, columns 8), generating 321,612 ha. to be added to the medium strata and 293,118 ha. to be added to the large strata. When 1998 DIGESTYC-EHPM estimated farm area is added, a total of 415,229 ha. is obtained for medium- size farms. For large farms, summing the area for the 173 farms originally estimated by the DIGESTYC-EHPM (23,972 ha), and 275,756 ha. in farm area to be added, I obtain a total of 299,728 ha. Subtracting the area of medium and large farms from total farm area, gives an estimate of the farm area in small farms at 643,679 ha. (48% of total farm area).¹⁰⁴⁵

It is possible that more farms were broken up within both the large and medium strata than I conservatively assumed with only a 10% attrition rate (about 32,000 ha.), above and beyond the farmland that was subdivided through the PTT process. Further research is required to determine whether a higher rate is justified.

Only a new agrarian census coupled with land registry data for the nation as a whole can provide the true distribution of farms and farm area in El Salvador after three decades of land reform. As already noted, no census has been conducted since 1971.¹⁰⁴⁶ Given the serious under-estimation of large and medium farms diagnosed in the 1998 household survey, the adjusted 1998 figures in Table D.4 are probably the best available estimate of current land distribution in El Salvador, from which indicators of agrarian inequality may be derived. Land distribution is only one, but arguably the most contentiously debated, element of the agrarian structure. Therefore, considerable care was taken in deriving Table D.4 in order to generate valid land inequality measures for the data analysis section of the paper below. However, I am less interested in the validity of the absolute measures of land inequality than in the variation between departments, which should not be affected by the correction methodology.

¹⁰⁴⁵ We include an estimated 230,000 ha. constituted by the cooperative sector in small farms, even though most are still held in various forms of collective or mixed collective and individual tenure.

¹⁰⁴⁶ The World Bank has financed a \$70 million overhaul of the land registry and cadastral institutions, as well as a complete registration of all 1.8 million urban and rural properties. The project was scheduled to be complete by 2010.

Table D.5 Department Gini Coefficients of Land Inequality, various years.

2A-9

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	1961 Gini	1971 Gini	1998 Gini	1980AgReform Area %Totarea	Change 61-71	Change 61-98	Col.6/ Col. 1
Ahuachapán	.852	.835	.748	19.8	.02	.104	.122
Santa Ana	.859	.832	.782	12.3	.027	-.078	.09
Sonsonate	.849	.878	.848	29.4	-.029	.001	.001
Chalatenango	.794	.780	.783	5.0	.014	.034	.043
La Libertad	.885	.867	.835	28.7	.018	.05	.056
San Salvador	.809	.811	.851	18.5	-.002	-.042	-.052
Cuscatlán	.721	.735	.835	6.9	-.014	-.114	-.158
La Paz	.778	.845	.818	24.7	-.067	-.04	-.051
Cabañas	.701	.678	.779	2.0	.023	-.078	-.113
San Vicente	.803	.809	.829	17.5	-.006	-.026	-.032
Usulután	.832	.815	.795	15.9	.017	.037	.044
San Miguel	.797	.794	.818	12.6	.003	-.021	-.026
Morazán	.673	.721	.815	2.4	-.048	-.142	-.211
La Union	.757	.751	.831	10.8	.006	-.074	-.097
Total	0.83	0.81	.81	15	.02	.02	.024

Table D.6 Correction Statistics Large farms

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	
	1998 DIGESTYC -EHPM	1971 Census	1998 Pred.	10% Reduction	Deficit (5-3)	1998 DIGESTYC- EHPM	Correction Add farms		Estimated 100+ Strata	
Dept	100+ farms	100+ farms	100+ farm s		100+	Wt. factor	a) No. (5/6)	b) Area (ha) 220 * (5/6)	Total Add Farms (7a*6)	Total Added Area (8a*7b)
1. AH	56	119	133	120	64	56	1	251	56	14,056
2. SA	0	260	138	124	124	106	1	257	106	27,242
3. SO	70	179	139	125	125	70	2	220,173	140	27,510
4. CH	0	158	66	59	59	69	1	188	69	12,972
5. LL	0	225	195	176	176	51	4	220, 220, 220, 100	204	38,760
6. SS	0	67	70	63	63	37	2	220, 155	74	13,875
7. CU	0	37	33	30	30	67	1	100	67	6,700
8. LP	0	129	86	77	77	70	1	242	70	16,940
9. CA	0	45	52	47	47	32	2	220,103	64	10,336
10. SV	47	133	120	108	61	47	1	285	47	13,395
11.US	0	174	139	125	125	56	2	220, 271	56	27,496
12.SM	0	201	213	192	192	183	1	231	183	42,273
13.LU	0	85	63	57	57	31	2	220,185	62	12,555
14.M O	0	127	147	132	132	74	2	220,172	74	29,000
Total	173	1941	1594	1435	1332		24		1272	293,118

Table D.7 Correction Statistics for Medium size farms

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	
	1998 DIGESTYC- EHPM	1971 Census	1998 Predict.	Adj. for large farm	Deficit (4+3- 1)		Correction Add Farms		Estimated 0-25 ha Strata	
Dept	25-100 ha farm	20-100 ha farm	25-100 ha farm	attrition	25- 100	Wt. fac	a) Raw No. farms (6/5)	b) Farm sizes (7a*50)	a) Total Add farms (7a*6)	b) Total Add Area (ha) (8a*7b)
1. AH	112	494	522	57	467	56	6 1	50 67	392	20,552
2. SA	246	1039	678	62	494	106	4 1	50 33	530	24,698
3. SO		223	491	62	483	70	6 1	50 45	490	24,150
4. CH	97	495	451	31	482	69	5 1	50 29	414	19,251
5. LL	69	243	359	84	443	51	6 1	50 67	357	18,717
6. SS	277	287	352	31	383	37	2 1	50 43	111	5,291
7. CU		453	200	13	213	67	2 1	50 59	201	10,653
8. LP	70	376	350	40	390	70	4 1	50 29	350	16,030
9. CA	212	438	448	22	470	32	8	50	256	12,800
10. SV		568	563	53	616	47	12 1	50 55	611	30,785
11. US	135	1055	606	62	668	56	9 1	50 26	560	26,656
12. SM	183	908	967	92	1059	183	4 1	50 39	915	38,056
13. MO	186	1294	587	26	613	31	13 1	50 39	434	21,359
14. LU	103	9224	1089	66	1155	74	13 1	50 61	1036	52,614
Total	1,690		8,429		7936		83		6,657	321,612

Table D.8 Gini Calculation Correction Statistics to 1988 McReynolds Data for small farms

	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	
	1971 Census	1988 Predict	1991 DIGESTYC- EHPM	1991 Adj. DIGESTYC- EHPM	1998 DIGESTYC- EHPM	Corrected 1988 0-25 Strata		Additional 1988 Cooperative Farms	
Dept	0-25 ha farms	0-25 ha farms	0-25 ha farms	0-25 ha farms	0-25 ha farms	a) Farms	Area (6a*1.9)	a) Area (ha)	Farms (7a*6.8)
1. AH	18,558	16,011	26,101	26,101	30,880	23,941	45,488	14,807	2,188
2. SA	23,139	20,543	19,115	19,115	32,764	26,203	49,786	19,349	2,845
3. SO	17,476	15,320	17,894	17,894	16,930	17,500	33,250	29,667	4,363
4. CH	20,061	7,932	17,718	20,000	18,470	18,180	34,542	7,484	1,100
5. LL	19,482	22,454	28,676	28,676	24,534	28,000	53,200	39,278	5,776
6. SS	13,627	23,844	11,106	11,106	16,627	15,000	28,500	13,566	1,995
7. CU	17,626	24,728	7750	8,000	81,52	8,000	15,200	3,443	506
8. LP	14,533	22,488	21,050	21,050	16,262	18,945	35,995	26,172	3,849
9. CA	15,178	9,903	20,110	20,110	15,348	18,009	34,217	729	107
10. SV	12,510	14,361	14,341	14,341	12,995	12,907	24,523	17,123	2,518
11. US	18,527	23,740	16,102	16,800	22,814	18,500	35,150	28,168	4,142
12. SM	27,844	13,331	16,226	16,226	37,184	30,500	57,950	20,327	2,989
13. MO	18,317	25,006	8,622	12,600	17,584	18,000	34,200	1,298	191
14. LU	23,514	19,769	16,046	19,400	26,000	25,000	47,500	16,175	2,379
Total	259,603	259,432	219,212	251,419	296,544	278,685	531,500	237,586	34,939

Table D.9 Estimation of Patterned Inequality for El Salvador, 1998

Farm Size	Ave. Farm Size (X)	Observed Number of Farms	Observed % of Total Farms	Natural Log of Observed % of Total farms LNPRCTOT	(Exponential) Predicted % of Total Farms	(Log- Exp) Predicted % of Total Farms
Lower						
0-.99	.49	183,589	.68	.39	.46	.81
1-1.99	1.49	56,664	.21	1.57	.26	.11
2-2.99	2.49	22,043	.08	2.51	.15	.04
3-3.99	3.49	5,274	.02	3.94	.08	.02
4-4.99	4.49	3,443	.01	4.37	.05	.015
Total Lower		271,013	1.00			
Upper						
5-9.99	7.49	6,079	.34	1.08	.21	.38
10-24.99	17.49	2,663	.15	1.90	.207	.24
25-49.99	37.99	4,220	.24	1.44	.19	.15
50-99.99a	74.99	3,264	.18	1.70	.17	.10
100-199.99	149.99	463	.03	3.65	.13	.07
200-299.99	249.99	1,145	.06	2.75	.09	.05
Total Upper		17,834	1.0			
		288,847				
Exponential $P < .001$, Chi Sq. = 17.81; Log-exponential $P < .003$, Chi Sq. =						
Source: Table 9, Corrected DIGESTYC-EHPM 1998 farm distribution.						

- a. The observed number of farms in the 50-99 strata is higher than would be expected due to the correction process, which replaced medium size farms with 50 hectare farms. Actually, a 50 hectare designation simplifies a medium size farm distribution of those below and above 50 hectares. In order to reduce the concentration of farms within the 50-99 ha strata, half of the observed farms were replaced in the 25-50 ha strata.

Table D.10 Estimation of Patterned Inequality for Chalatenango, 1998

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Farm Size	Ave. Farm Size (x)	Observed Number of Farms	Observed % of Total Farms	Natural Log of Observed % of Total farms PRELNCH	(Exponential) Predicted % of Total Farms	(Log-Exp) Predicted % of Total Farms
Lower						
0-.99	.49	11,490	.75	.29	.49	.84
1-1.99	1.49	3,546	.23	1.47	.26	.10
2-2.99	2.49	1,565	.10	2.29	.135	.04
3-3.99	3.49	166	.01	4.53	.07	.02
4-4.99	4.49	194	.01	4.37	.036	.01
Total Lower		15,396	1.00			
Upper						
5-9.99	7.49	720	.47	.76	.26	.43
10-24.99	17.49	304	.20	1.62	.25	.26
25-49.99	37.99	269	.18	1.74	.21	.17
50-199.99a	124.99	173	.11	2.18	.16	.08
200-299.99	249.99	69	.04	3.10	.09	.06
Total Upper		1,535	1.00			
Exponential $p < .001$, Chi Sq. = 20.36; Log –exponential $p < .46$, Chi Sq. = 2.57						

- a. The 50-99 and 100-199 strata were combined because Chalatenango reported no farms in the latter strata.

APPENDIX E. Data on Political and Economic Decentralization in Latin America

Table E.1 Political Decentralization in Latin America

	Year of post-Auth. Natl Election	Direct or Popular Election of Mayor	Election/ Apptmt of Deptl. or Province Exec 4	Mayoral Term of Office	Re-elect Mayor	Formal Override Authority	SSN	Total Finance \$ mn.	Externl Share (%)
Brazil	1985	Elected (1985)	Elected (1982)	5	No	No	various state level SSNs		
Chile	1990	Indirect (1992)	Appointed (1993)	4	Yes	No	FOSIS (1991-95)	316	11
Colombia	1958	Direct (1988)	Elected (1992)	3	No	No	Red Solidaridad (1995-96)	1255	20
Bolivia	1985	Direct (1987)	Elected (2005)	5	No	No	FSE (86-89) FIS (91-95)	195.3 219.5	87 90
El Salvador	1984/ 1994	Direct (1985)	Appointed	3	Yes	Yes	FIS/FISDL (1990-95)	212.6	91
Guatemala	1985	Elected (1985)	Appointed	2 c	Yes	Yes	FONAPAZ 91-96 FIS (1992-95)	67.5 122.6	12 89
Costa Rica	1948	Indirect (1970)	Appointed	4	Yes	Yes			
Honduras	1982	Elected (1981)	Appointed	4	Yes	No	FHIS (1990-95)	213	81
Venezuela	1961	Elected (1989)	Elected (1989)	3	Yes	No	FONVIS (1992-96)	140	60
Mexico	1917/ 1988	Elected (1982)	Elected	3	No	No	PRONOSAL SEDESAL	9,000	
Argentina	1983	Direct (1983)	Elected (1983)	4	Yes	No			
Ecuador	1978	Direct b (1978)	Appointed (1978)	4	No	Yes	FISE (1991-95)	109.1	95
Nicaragua	1984/ 1990	Indirect (1990)	Appointed	6		Yes	FISE (1991-96)	250.6	91
Panama	1991	Direct (1994)	Appointed	5	Yes	Yes	FES (1991-95)	102.7	80
Paraguay	1991	Direct (1991)	Elected (1994)			Yes	PROPAIS (1996)	31	90
Peru	1980	Direct (1981)	None	3	Yes	No	FONCODES (1991-96)	890	58
Uruguay		None	Elected (1984)			NA	PRIS/FAS	90.5	76
Dom. Rep.	1966	Elected 1966					PROComunidad (1995-96)	44.3	93

Sources:

1. Peterson (1997) for Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Bolivia
 - a. Legislation for direct elections has been proposed
 - b. For large cities only (greater than 100,000 population and provincial capitals). All other mayors are elected indirectly. Bolivia is divided into four sub-national levels: departmental, provincial, sub-provincial, and cantónes. Municipal governments are located in urban areas only. Departmental prefects were until the 2005 elections, selected by the president, and they in turn appoint the sub-prefects.
 - c. Guatemala City has a four year term.
 - d. Costa Rica municipal executive consists of a city manager appointed by city council. City manager may be removed by a two-thirds majority of councilors.
 - e. Ecuadorian provinces are governed by both an elected executive (prefecto) and a governor appointed by the central government.
 - f. Chile has three levels of sub-national government: regional, provincial, and municipal. The candidate for municipal council who receives at least 35% of the vote is elected mayor. If no candidate receives 35% of the vote, the mayor is chosen by a vote of elected members of the municipal council. The president has the power to appoint the Intendente at the regional level. Members of the Regional Council are elected by the councils of municipalities located within the region. These regional councilors can exercise an effective veto over the Intendente.
 - g. Peruvian regional governments consisting of elected officials were established in 1989 but were suspended by the government of Alberto Fujimori in 1992.
 - h. Uruguayan sub-national level government performs both departmental and municipal functions.
 - i. Brazilian mayors of state capitals were elected for the first time 1985, since the military coup in 1964.
 - j. Although municipal elections in Mexico were part of the 1917 constitution, victories by opposition parties at the municipal level began in 1982, and at the state level in 1989. Mexico City mayor was appointed until 1997.
 - k. Open list voting replaced closed, blocked party list in Venezuela in 1989
 - l. Regional or provincial level governments are appointed and are assigned resources and responsibilities by the ruling party leader or president in Chile, Guatemala, and Bolivia.
2. Willis, Garmen and Haggard (1999) National government has authority to revoke automatically the mandate of an elected mayor or override laws passed at the municipal level.
3. Burki, Perry, Dillinger (1998)
4. Nickson (1995)
5. Goodman, Morley, Siri and Zuckerman (1997)

Table E.2 Fiscal Decentralization in Latin America (no data where cells are blank)

Country	Decentralization Measure	Level of Govt	Share of Total Govt. Rev. Collected 1980-90	Share of Total Govt. Revenue Collected MRY	Share of Total Govt Expend 1980-90	Share of Total Govt Expend MRY	Local Revenue Base	Vertl. Imbalance	LG Debt Autonomy
Latin America						14.6		52	
Argentina		CG SG LG	79.3 13.7 7.0	80.0 15.4 4.6	63.5 31.0 5.4 ('83)	51.9 39.5 8.6(49.3)		56	3.0
Brazil	State and Municipal Share of Public Sector Expend.	CG SG LG	59.8 36.9 3.8	47.1 49.4 3.6	50.2 36.2 13.6	36.5 40.7 22.8	41 -tax 44-CT 15 other	33	2.9
Mexico		CG SG LG	90.7 ('82) 8.3 1.0	82.7 ('92) 13.4 3.9	90.2 8.8 1.0 ('82)	87.8 9.5 2.8(25.4)	CT,PT, BLT	61	1.8
Venezuela		CG SG LG	95.8 ('80) 0.1 4.0	96.9 ('89) 0.1 3.1	76.0 14.9 7-9.1	77.7 15.7 6.5(19.6)	CT,PT,VT 18 tax, 64 CT 18 other	83	1.0
Chile	Regional and Municipal Share of Public Sector Expenditure	CG SG LG	0.7 ('80)	19.5 ('92)	11 ('91)	14-15	PT, health, educ grants	61	0
Colombia	Departmental and Municipal Share of Centrally Collected Revenue	CG SG LG	82.2 12.2 5.6	81.6 11.1 7.3 38.3 ('91) 5.2 1 ('97)	72.8 16.7 10.5 ('80)	67.0 15.7 17.3-243 S/L-39	CT,PT, gas tax, indust+ commerc tax	38	2.0
Bolivia	Municipal Share of Centrally Collected	CG SG				S/L26.7	CT,VT,PT	43	0.5

	Revenue	LG			10 ('93)	20 ('95)			
El Salvador		CG SG LG			3 (90)	6	CT	90	1.5
Guatemala		CG SG LG			8/143 ('87)	S/L10.3 11 (93)	CT, VAT1%, local tax	67	1.0
Costa Rica		CG SG LG			43 ('89)	S/L 2.3 10 ('91)6			0.5
Honduras		CG SG LG			5 law 1.5 real	S/L12.3 8 ('94)		49	1.0
Ecuador		CG SG LG				S/L-7.5 5 ('92)	CT, PT, VT, BLT	58	2.0
Nicaragua		CG SG LG			13 ('89)	S/L-5.2			-
Panama		CG SG LG				S/L-3.2 23			0.5
Paraguay		CG SG LG				S/L-6.2 23		23	1.0
Peru		CG SG LG			8 ('87)	S/L10.5	CT, PT, 15 tax 15 CT 28 other	5	1.5
Uruguay		CG SG LG			4 ('86)	S/L 14.2		17	1.0
Dom. Rep.		CG SG LG			4 ('86)	S/L 2.9			1.0

CT-Central Government Transfer, PT - Property tax, VT - Vehicle tax, BLT - Business License Tax, Other - non-tax revenue,
Sources:

1. Peterson (1997) for Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Bolivia
2. Willis, Garmen and Haggard (1999) for Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela
3. Stein (1997) in Kiichiro Fukasaku and Ricardo Hausmann (1998) Democracy, Decentralization and Deficits in Latin America. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.
4. Andrew Nickson (1995) Local Government in Latin America. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
5. Burki, Perry and Dillinger (1998)
6. Rivera (1999)

Table E.3 NGOs in Latin America

	NGOs	Pop.	NGOs/ mn. pop.	Democracy Rating				
				1972	1980	1988	94-95	97-98
El Salvador	700	5.5	127.3	2/3	6/4	3/3	3.0	2/3
Guatemala	700	10	70	2/3	5/6	3/3	4.5	2/3
Honduras	95	5.3	18				3.0	
Bolivia	530	7.1	75	5/4	7/5	2/3	3.0	1/3
Nicaragua	300	4.1	73				4.0	
Costa Rica	320	3.3	97	1/1	1/1	1/1	1.5	1/2
Chile	700	13.8	51	1/2	6/5	5/4	2.0	3/3
Mexico	608	90	7				4.0	
Argentina	850	33.8	25				2.5	
Haiti	146	7	21				5.0	
S.Africa	10,000	39.7	252				1.5	
Mozambique	27	15.1	1.8				3.5	
Bangladesh	1200	115.2	10				3.5	
Philippines	6000	64.8	93				3.0	
Egypt	13,239	56.4	235				6.0	
Tunisia	5186	8.7	596				5.5	

Source: Fisher (1998: 162-164)

APPENDIX F. Civilian & Military Deaths in the Salvadoran Civil War, 1979-1991

Table F.1 Estimated Civilian & Military Deaths in the Salvadoran Civil War, 1979-1991

	1972-77ave.	1977-79 ave	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Total (1979-1991)
1. Civilian Deaths			580	14,343	16,357	12,547	5,826	3318	2,287	1,821	1,415	1,891	3,713	1,323	1,035	Max 66,456
				13,138	13,353	5,962	5,569	2,860	1,832	1,091		301	500			Min 38,259
				11,903	6,116	5,339			1,543			261	432			
									335							
2. Combat Deaths																
Salv. Armed Forces (FAES)			132	3,477	801	1579	2400	1,296	859	742	832	788	1,356	1,000	878	Max 16,140
						1,200	1,693	750	749	459	500	455	600			Min 11,556
						953	1,298		426		470		457			
FAES Casualties (incl. paramil)											17,000					
FMLN source			900	5,859	5,133	3,587	9,164	4,962	6,084	6,151	6,079	7,230		2,000		
Govt Source					2,100	4,000	3,560	2,456	2,109		3,285					
Ave 1+2			900	2,500	3,617	3,794	6,362	3,709	4,097	4,121	4,682	4,844	5,400	2,000	1,756	Ave. 47,781
Monthly ave.	11	73	75	208	301	316	530	309	341	343	390	404	450	167	146	3,982
FMLN			100	658	1500	750	2,000	783	1,123	900	1,004	1,111	1,902	832	500	Max 13,163
					500		774	334	1,034		900	826	1,853			Min 9,790
			8								809		1,773			
FMLN Casualties (Govt source)				687	2,200	1,500	4,000	1,120	2,246	1,772	1,674	2,201	3,490	1,664	1,000	23,554
FMLN Source											1,490					
	37	342		57	183	125	333	93	187	148	140	183	291	139	83	164
3. Disappearances				979	927	1,177	526	196	185	39	213	253	293	164	157	5,109
Total Estimated Cum. Death Toll							42,000							73,000		
4. Yearly totals (1+2+3)																
Maximum Annual Estimate			812	19,457	19,585	16,053	10,752	5,593	4,454	3,502	3,464	4,043	7,264	3,319	2,570	Max 100,868
Minimum Annual Estimate			812	17,017	8,344	8,466	8,167	4,140	1,980	2,489	2,907	1,795	2,955	3,319	2,570	Min 64,961
5. Cumulative Totals																
Maximum Cum. Estimate			812	20,269	39,854	55,907	66,659	72,252	76,706	80,208	83,672	87,715	94,979	98,298	100,868	83,000
Minimum Cum. Estimate			812	17,829	26,173	34,639	42,806	46,946	48,926	51,415	54,322	56,117	59,072	62,391	64,961	

Table F.2 San Vicente ISTA Agrarian Reform Properties transferred in the March 1980 Phase I reform (see Figure 5.2)

Map No.	Property Name	Area (Has.)
1	Parras Lempa	1,144.3
2	El Marquezado	434.7
3	El Chorro	367.2
4	Sta. Teresa, Sta. Amalia y Las Moras	693.4
5	Sihuatepeque, San Pablo Cañales	712.4
6	Las Queseras	703.3
7	Guajoyo	601.1
8	La Joya	954.5
9	Achichilco	409.8
10	Santa Marta	211.3
11	El Coyol	217.5
12	Barrio Nuevo	522.4
13	San Luis las Posadas	216.8
14	San Nicolás	150.8
15	Miramar	411.5
16	San Luis Alto	133.8
17	San Juan Buenavista	253.4
18	Santa Monica – Los Lotes	34.2
19	San Antonio Caminos	55.9
20	Los Angeles	159.4
21	Nuevo Oriente	209.7
22	La Cañada Arenera	142.1
23	San Jeronimo	40.0
24	La Primavera	85.3
25	Gran Sasso	257.6
26	Guachipilín	482.3
27	Los Almendros	472.0
28	San Ramon Grifal	179.2
29	Las Puertecitas	409.8
30	El Izcatlal	339.3
31	Los Lotes 45	34.9
	San Vicente Department Pre-1980 ISTA Farms	Area (ha.)
A	Tehuacan & Teocali	500.6
B	No data	
C	La Rinconera	113.1
D	Las Pampas & Santa Monica	1183.4
E	San Nicolas Lempa	479.8
F	Las Anonas	142.3
G	El Porvenir II	403.5
H	San Bartolo	389.3
I	El Naranjo I & II & Puerto Nuevo	542.1
J	Santa Marta, Las Puertecitas	1,174.4
Map in Figure 5.2 was reproduced from a photograph of a map in the office of the ISTA Director. Table F.2 data was provided by ISTA for Phase I properties in February 2000. The two sources are not completely consistent.		

APPENDIX G. Summary of Municipal and Legislative Election Results, 1994-2003

Table G.1 Municipal Governments Won by Party, El Salvador (1994-2003)

Party	1994	%	1997	%	2000	%	2003	%
ARENA	206	78.6	160	61.1	127	48.5	111	42.4
FMLN	15	6.1	54*	20.6	79**	30.2	74**	28.2
PCN	9	3.4	18	6.9	33	12.6	53	20.2
PDC	30	11.5	15	5.7	16	6.1	18****	6.9
CD/CDU	0	0	0	0	4	1.5	4	1.5
Other	2	0.7	15	5.7	3	1.1	2	0.7
Total	262	100	262	100	262	100	262	100
* Includes 6 municipalities won in coalition; ** includes 12 municipalities won in coalition; *** includes 4 municipalities won in coalition. Other can include: MNR, MAC, MU, MSN, PD, PL, PLD, PRSC, PUNTO, MAS, PAN, PPL, USC, FC, PSD, PPR, and MR. Based on data provided by the Supreme Electoral Council (TSE)								

Table G.2 Legislative Deputies Won by Party, El Salvador (1994-2003)

Party	1994	%	1997	%	2000	%	2003	%
ARENA	39	46.4	28	33.3	29	34.5	27	32.1
FMLN	21	25.0	27	32.1	31	37.0	31	37.0
PCN	4	4.8	11	13.1	14	16.7	16	19.0
PDC	18	21.4	7	8.3	5	6.0	4	4.8
CD/CDU	1	1.2	2	2.4	3	3.6	5	6.0
Other	1	1.2	9	10.7	2	2.4	1	1.2
Total	84	100	84	100	84	100	84	100

Table G.3 Summary of National Assembly Election Results, El Salvador (1994-2003)

Municipal Vote by Party (1994-2003)								
Party	1994	%	1997	%	2000	%	2003	%
ARENA	598,391	44.5	410,537	36.8	438,859	36.0	491,452	35.0
FMLN	273,498	20.3	365,176	32.7	338,950	27.8	471,042	33.6
FMLN incl. coalition					424,111	34.8		
PCN	107,110	8.0	102,961	9.2	123,950	10.2	210,056	15.0
PDC	261,130	19.4	101,945	9.1	95,509	7.8	104,494	7.5
CDU	48,763	3.6	26,986	2.4	54,291**	3.4	37,629	2.7
Other	n.a.	n.a.	108,363	9.7	81,276*	7.7	88,253	6.3
Total	1,345,454	100	1,115,878	100	1,217,996	100	1,402,926	100
* does not include FMLN, CDU, USC coalition votes ** includes USC coalition in San Salvador								

Table G.4 Summary of National Assembly Election Results, El Salvador (1994-2003)

Legislative Vote by Party (1994-2003)								
Party	1994	%	1997	%	2000	%	2003*	%
ARENA	605,775	45.0	396,301	335.3	436,169	36.0	446,279	31.9
FMLN	287,811	21.4	369,709	33.0	426,289	35.2	475,130	34.0
PCN	83,520	6.2	97,362	8.7	106,802	8.8	181,167	12.9
PDC	240,451	17.9	93,645	8.4	87,074	7.2	101,854	7.3
CD/CDU	59,843	4.5	39,145	3.5	65,070	5.4	89,090	6.4
Others	67,877	5.0	123,441	11.0	88,865	7.3	105,206	7.5
Total	1,345,277	100	1,119,603	100	1,210,269	100	1,398,726	100
Preliminary, from ECA (2003) Vol. 653-654, pg. 182.								

Table G.5 Swing in Municipal Vote, El Salvador (1994-2003)

	Change in Municipal Vote					
	1994-1997		1997-2000		2000-2003	
ARENA	-187,854	-31.4	28,322	6.9	52,593	12.0
FMLN	91,678	33.5	-26,226	-7.2	132,092	38.9
FMLN incl. coalition			-58,935	-16.1	46,931	11.1
PCN	-4,149	-3.9	20,984	20.4	86,106	69.4
PDC	-159,185	-60.9	-6,436	-6.3	8,985	9.4
CD/CDU	-21,777	-44.7	14,563	54.9	-16,662*	-30.7
Others					6,977	8.6
Total	-281,287	-20.9	31,207	2.8	184,900	15.2
* does not reflect added vote from coalition with FMLN (est. 2,000 addl votes)						

Table G.6 Swing in National Assembly Vote, El Salvador (1994-2003)

	Change in Legislative Vote					
	1994-1997		1997-2000		2000-2003	
Party	Change	%	1997	%	2000	%
ARENA	-209,474	-34.6	39,868	10.1	10,110	2.3
FMLN	81,898	28.5	56,580	15.3	48,841	11.5
PCN	13,842	16.6	9,440	9.7	74,365	69.6
PDC	-146,806	-61.1	-6,571	-7.0	14,780	17.0
CD/CDU	-20,698	-34.6	25,925	66.2	24,020	36.9
Others	55,564	81.9	-34,576	-28.0	16,341	18.4
Total	-225,674	-16.8	90,666	8.1	188,457	18.4

APPENDIX H. Case Study Municipality Institutional Maps

Figure H.1 TECOLUCA INSTITUTIONAL MAP

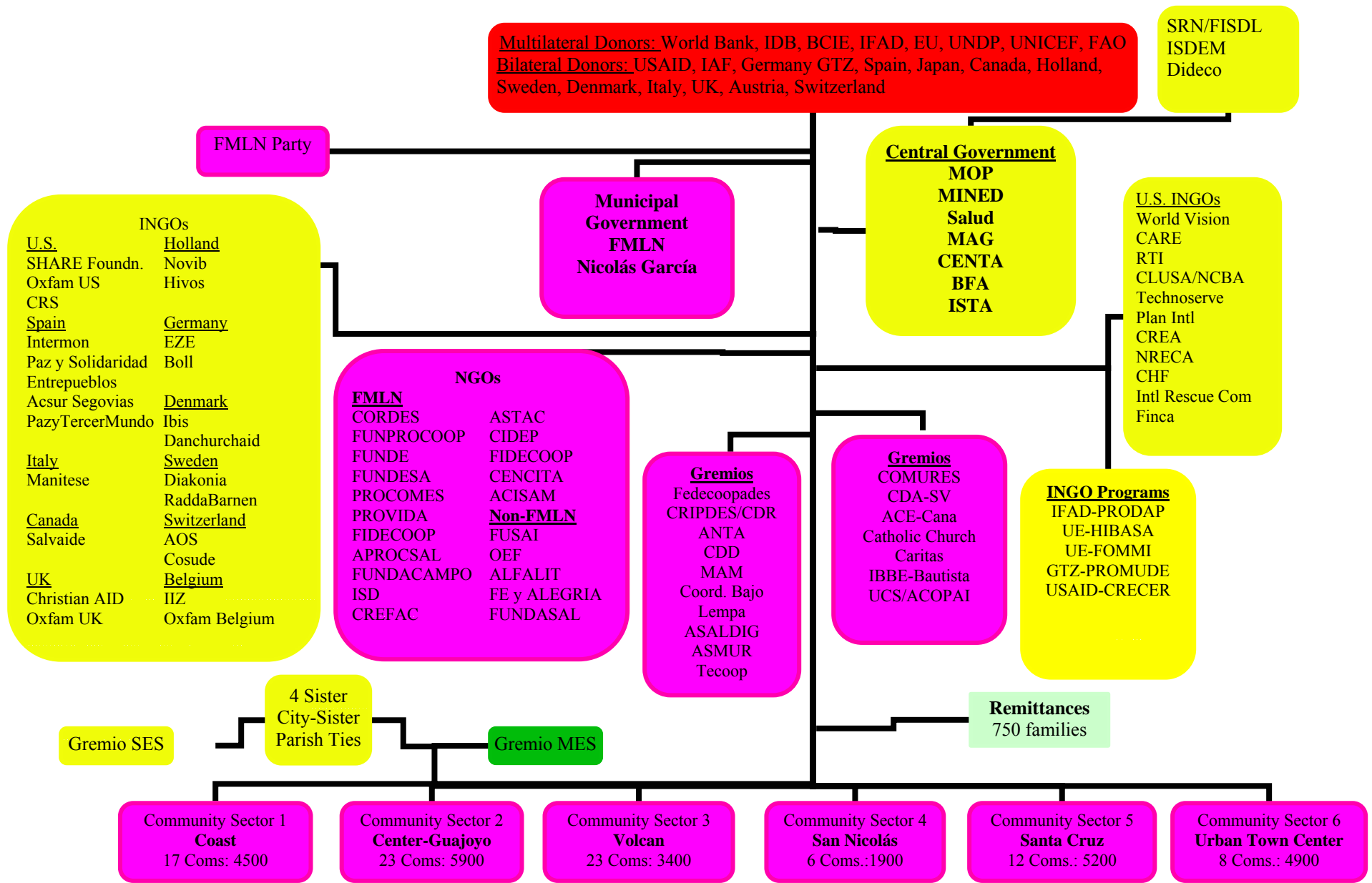


Figure H.2 JIBOA VALLEY INSTITUTIONAL MAP

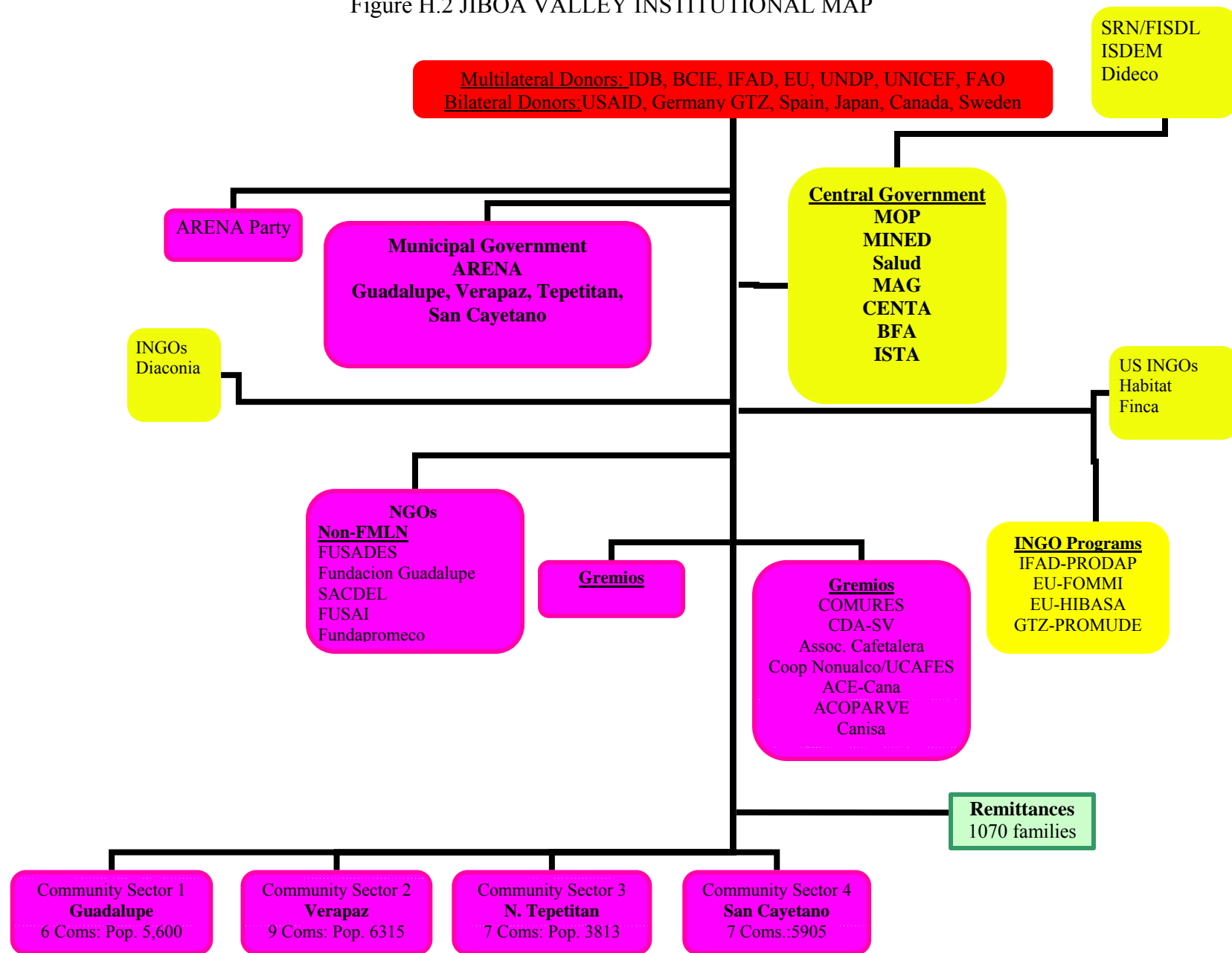
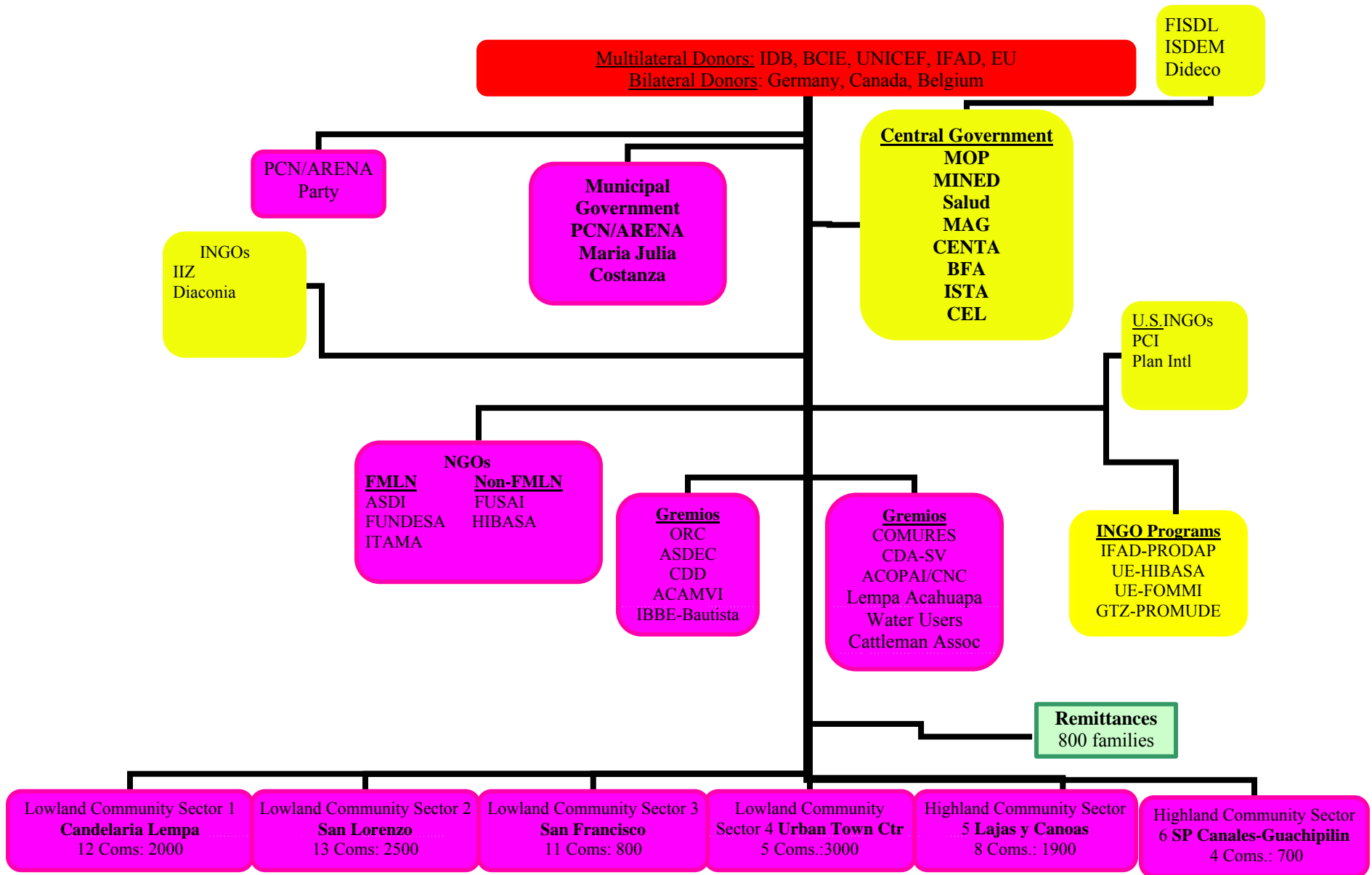


Figure H. 3 SAN ILDEFONSO INSTITUTIONAL MAP



APPENDIX I. Empowerment Indicators

Table I.1 Indicators and Data Sources for Empowerment/Disempowerment Resources

(JV-Jiboa Valley, T-Tecoluca, SF- San Ildefonso, FC – FMLN Control Communities, FE – FMLN Expansion Communities, GE-Government Expansion Communities, GC –Government Control Communities, Sig. = statistical significance for ANOVA two tailed test, NS = $p > 0.10$)

RESOURCES	Individual-Community Level Data Sources (1998 Paracentral Survey, n=912 unless noted otherwise)	Survey Mean	JV	T	SF	Sig	FC	FE	GE	GC	Sig.
Economic Capital											
1. Income	Reported monthly income range, P1.37	\$171	\$148	\$115	\$133	.000	\$133	\$123	\$166	\$170	.000
2. Land (n=435)	Reported land owned or rented, ha. (P1.11, P1.17)	2.7	1.9	2.1	3.3	NS	2.1	3.6	2.5	2.5	NS
3. Land inequality	Gini index of land inequality among producers w access to land	0.52	0.57	0.20	0.47		0.20	0.33	0.55	0.67	
4. Collective land ownership	% of landowners holding some or all land in collective title	21.4	7.3	34.7	11.1	.000	27.2	22.8	24.6	11.6	.000
5. Livestock (n=132)	Reported cattle owned of 467 ag. Producers	5.4	3.1	5.8	5.3	NS	4.8	6.2	5.1	5.2	NS
6. Remittances (Exit option)	Reported receipt of remittances (range) in last year (P1.40)	19.7%	16.1	14.8	15.1	.05	11.5	15.8	25.7	19.4	.05
7. Dependency Index	Total household occupations per family member	.379	.34	.36	.31	.000	.356	.342	.413	.373	.005
8. Household Asset Index 9. (n=912)	Index of 5 household assets: tv,vcr,fridge,phone,auto (Sum P1.45-P1.49). Weighted Scale 0-10	1.1	1.2	0.5	0.55	.000	0.38	0.38	1.3	1.4	
10. Farm HH Asset Index (n=436)	Index of 6 farm assets:tractor,plow,silo,car,ox team, grain mill (Sum P1.50-P1.55) Wtd Scale 0-10	0.72	1.17	1.02	0.70	.000	0.59	0.59	0.39	0.43	.000
Human Capital											
1. Education level	Reported years of education achieved	4.95	5.2	3.55	3.75	.000	3.3	3.8	4.8	5.9	.000
2. Education example	Maximum level of educational achievement within household	8.2	9.2	6.6	6.4	.000	6.3	5.8	8.8	9.2	.000
3. Civic Knowledge (CIVINFO)	Knowledge of mayor, council rep, & legislator (Sum P3.1, P3.2, P3.3, P4.1, P5.1) Scale 0-10	5.5	4.8	5.7	6.5	.000	6.4	6.2	5.1	5.3	.000

Table I.1 Continued

RESOURCES	Individual-Community Level Data Sources (1998 Paracentral Survey, n=912 unless noted otherwise)	Survey Mean	JV	T	SF	Sig	FC	FE	GE	GC	Sig.
Social Capital											
1. Social Ties	Reported trust in neighbors to help resolve household challenges/problems (Mean P10.1-P10.5) Scale 0-10	3.9	3.0	3.8	4.3	.006	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.8	NS
2. Association Density	Ave. number of organizational memberships (Sum P6.11-P6.17) Scale 0-7	2.5	2.1	2.7	2.6	.000	3.2	2.9	2.3	2.3	.000
3. Exit options	Distance to nearest paved road (km)	5.3	6.6	4.7	10.5	.000	9.3	9.5	1.8	5.1	.000
4. Exit options	Distance to nearest market (km)	16	9.4	19.0	39.5	.000	25.4	25.0	9.3	15.1	.000
Political Capital											
1. Access to Local Govt	Reported contact of mayor or town council P3.6	26.4	25.2	21.9	38.7	.000	28.5	31.6	21.7	27.5	.01
2. Access to Natl Govt	Reported contact of government official P4.2	22.9	19.3	24.8	19.0	NS	30	25.5	20.5	21.4	.05
3. Access to NGO	Reported contact of NGO P5.3	46.7	22.6	51.5	38.0	.000	55.6	50.0	34.7	43.4	.000
4. Collective Efficacy1	Level of confidence that neighbors could be counted on to solve a serious problem that confronted the community (excessive energy price increases, contamination by local business) (Percent saying much	46.7	27.5	44.5	42.6	.000	54.0	45.9	52.9	40.3	.002
5. Collective Efficacy2-	Willingness to participate in a protest against a government announced project that would harm the community (Percent saying very willing)	69.5	44.7	74.8	68.2	.000	80.5	72.9	73.5	62.0	.002
6. Collective Efficacy3- Development with Equity	Level of agreement with proposition that short-term inequality is necessary if economic conditions are to improve (Pct opposed)	22.4	31.2	44.6	19.8	.000	37.9	12.4	23.0	19.7	.004

Table I.2 Indicators and Data Sources for Empowerment/Disempowerment Mediating Attitudes

MEDIATING ATTITUDES	Individual-Community Level Data Sources (1998 Paracentral Survey, n=912 unless noted otherwise)	Survey Mean	JV	T	SF	Sig	FC	FE	GE	GC	Sig.
1. Inter-Personal Trust	Reported trust based on 3 question scale, (Mean P9.1, P9.2, P9.3) Scale 0-10	5.7	5.3	5.2	5.4	NS	5.9	5.4	6.0	5.5	NS
2. Life Satisfaction	Reported index of satisfaction (job, income, house, health care) (Mean p1.55, p1.56, p1.57, p1.59) Scale 0-10	5.7	5.3	5.2	5.4	NS	5.9	5.4	5.9	5.5	NS
3. Optimism	Economic Expectations (P1.41) Scale 0-3	2.1	2.06	2.32	2.08	.003	2.24	2.14	2.06	2.0	.005
4. Impact of the war 1	Life is better or worse now than before the war (0 – worse; 5 – better)	3.0	2.33	3.97	4.63	.000	5.68	3.92	2.56	2.13	.000
5. Impact of the war 2	What, if anything, did the war achieve (0- only costs; 5 – specific, broad benefits)	2.7	2.35	3.2	3.0	.000	3.8	3.0	2.7	2.2	.000
6. Development Aspirations	What life improvements are achievable in future (P18.2) Scale 0-10	6.5	6.4	7.0	6.6	.005	7.3	6.7	6.4	6.4	.000
7. Subjective Self-Confidence	Reported confidence that one can make a difference (P6.3) Scale 0-10	3.95	3.91	4.83	3.8	.01	5.0	4.3	3.9	3.5	.000
8. Political Efficacy	Reported efficacy of voting participation (Mean P12.1-P12.4) Scale 0-10	5.4	5.0	6.2	5.8	.000	6.1	5.8	5.4	5.0	.000
9. System Support	Index of reported confidence in 10 institutions (Mean P14.1-P14.11) Scale 0-10	4.5	4.0	4.2	4.8	.005	3.9	4.6	4.8	4.6	.003
10. Preferences for social change	Percent reporting preference for radical or revolutionary social change (over gradual reforms and defense against revolutionary movements).	6.8	4.3	23.8	3.9	.000	26.1	5.0	3.7	3.1	.000
11. Religious non-fatalism	Mean opposition to the proposition that national problems can be resolved by only becoming closer to God, P16.4	2.2	2.1	2.85	2.1	.000	2.7	2.15	2.3	2.04	.000

Table I.3 Indicators and Data Sources for Empowerment/Disempowerment Achievements

ACHIEVEMENTS	Data Source	Survey Mean	JV	T	SF	Sig.	FC	FE	GE	GC	Sig.
Individual-Community Level											
Meeting Basic Needs											
1. Access to water	Reported access (P1.42)	68.4	66.5	80	55.5	.000	74.6	43.9	67.6	74.0	.003
2. Access to electricity	Reported access (P1.43)	62.5	85.2	40	38.7	.000	19.2	22.8	70.6	82.6	.000
3. Access to adequate housing	Reported access (P1.44)	34.1	32.3	42.6	10.1	.000	43.1	20.2	40.8	30.6	NS
4. Access to health care	Reported very satisfied (P1.58)	40.4	35.1	40.7	37.9	NS	32.3	38.1	45.1	40.5	NS
5. Project beneficiary	% reporting having benefited from or participated in a community project (P8.1)	68	62	81	80	.000	81	77	63	65	.000
Social & Political Action											
1. Voice in community decisions	Who makes local decisions (Scale 0-10) Max is most participatory (LOCDEC)	5.8	5.0	6.9	6.1	.000	7.6	6.9	5.6	5.2	.000
2. Satisfaction w local decision making	Assessment of community decision making (P6.2) Scale 0-6, Max strongest approval	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.8	.053	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.7	.000
3. Local Demand Effectiveness (n=243)	Percent that reported requests to municipal government were met	40.3	52.6	47.1	28.3	NS	35.1	19.4	50.9	43.9	.018
4. Government Demand Effectiveness (n=209)	Percent that reported requests to municipal government were met	62.2	50	63.4	42.9	NS	64.3	57.1	62.5	62.7	NS
5. NGO Demand Effectiveness (n=149)	Percent that reported requests to municipal government were met	83.9	85.7	84	84.2	NS	91.7	86.2	70.4	78.8	NS
6. Efficacious participation 1	Formal organizational participation Index, PP1:relig, school, adesco, union, coop, other (Mean P6.11-P6.16) Scale 0-10	3.7	3.1	4.0	3.8	.000	4.6	4.3	3.7	3.3	.000
7. Efficacious participation 2	Informal community participation index, PP2 (Mean P6.4 – P6.6) Scale 0-10)	3.6	3.4	4.7	3.9	.000	5.3	4.0	3.3	3.1	.000
8. Efficacious participation 3	Project participation index, PP3:labor, materials, design, choose contractor, control budget, evaluate, direct, other (Mean P8.4-P8.11) Scale 0-10)	3.1	2.5	3.3	3.1	.087	3.9	3.3	3.1	2.7	.000
9. Women's organizational participation	Percent of women who report some or frequent participation in a local women's organization, P6.18	9.7	6.4	23.7	5.4	.001	37.1	7.4	3.5	5.8	.000
10. Women's influence	Percent of women who report that women have more influence now than before the war	61	58.4	71.6	50.	.000	79.7	58.1	65.1	58.4	.000

Table I.3 Indicators and Data Sources for Empowerment/Disempowerment Achievements (Continued)

ACHIEVEMENTS	Data Source	Survey Mean	JV	T	SF	Sig.	FC	FE	GE	GC	Sig.
11. Participation in cabildo abierto	Percent that reported participation in cabildo abierto or municipal assembly in past six months	20.4	22.6	21.3	22.7	NS	28.5	20.2	14.7	21.7	.01
12. Protesting	Percent that reported participation in recent protest activity	16.3	4.5	41.9	15.1	.000	60.8	24.6	7.4	5.6	.000
13. Voting/abstention	Percent that reported voting in most recent election	65.0	45.2	66.5	68.9	.000	74.6	60.5	68.4	60.9	.014
Local Problem Solving & Advocacy											
1. Problem solving skills	Analysis of top local problem (P7.1-P7.4) Likert Scale of Problem Identification, analysis, and Solution (0-9)	4.65	4.7	5.4	4.7	.001	5.5	4.9	4.5	4.4	.000
2. Collective Advocacy	Percent reporting communal, collective problem solving methods (P7.4)	31.6	32.6	46.1	27.7	.000	52.0	26.3	29.1	28.0	.000
Ag Resource Mobilization											
1. Improve local outcomes (N=467)	Reported increase in agricultural production over prior year	39.5	60	46.3	33.8	NS	42.5	32.9	37.8	45.6	NS
2. Improve local outcomes (N=467)	Reported improvement in agricultural income	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.8	NS	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	NS
3. Agriculture diversification (N=467)	Reported level of diversification (P1.18)	1.7	2.8	2.2	1.1	.000	2.5	1.2	1.4	2.3	.000
4. Agriculture intensification (N=467))	Index of reported access to four agricultural technology indicators (Sum P1.22a, P1.23a, P1.18a, P1.25a) Wtd Scale 0-10.	3.3	4.14	4.3	2.0	.000	4.9	3.5	3.2	3.6	.000
5. Land cultivated	% of land cultivated	62	96	65	39	.01	65	34	72	74	NS
6. Land security	% of landowners with title to 50% or more of land	75.5	94.4	54.3	67.5	.000	60.6	53.8	88.0	95.8	.000
7. Access to credit (n=279)	Reported loan in the past year (P1.29)	28	22.6	27.7	20.2	.03	32.3	25.4	32.4	24	.06

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